G.W.F. Hegel

Critical Assessments

Edited by
Robert Stern

Volume IV
Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Spirit*

Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers



G. W. F. HEGEL
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VOLUME IV
Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Spirit*



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Contents

	Acknowledgements	vii
78	Introduction *Robert Stern*	1
	Philosophy of Nature	
79	Hegel's philosophy of nature and the structure of science *Gerd Buchdahl*	15
80	A re-interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of nature *George R. Lucas*	41
81	Hegel's criticism of Newton *M. J. Petry*	52
	Philosophy of Mind	
82	Hegel's philosophy of mind *Charles Taylor*	71
83	Hegel's triadic doctrine of cognitive mind *Murray Greene*	89
84	Language and consciousness in Hegel's Jena writings *Daniel J. Cook*	108
85	Hegel on representation and thought *Willem de Vries*	126
	Ethics and Politics	
86	Freedom and social categories in Hegel's ethics *Terry Pinkard*	137
87	The emptiness of the moral will *Allen W. Wood*	160
88	The *Phenomenology*: beyond morality *Judith N. Shklar*	189
89	Economic and social integration in Hegel's political philosophy *Raymond Plant*	220
90	Political community and individual freedom in Hegel's philosophy of state *Z. A. Pelczynski*	248

91 The dialectic of civil society *K.-H. Ilting, translated by H. Tudor and J. M. Tudor* 274
92 Hegel on property and personality *Dudley Knowles* 293
93 Hegel's critique of liberal theories of rights *Peter G. Stillman* 312
94 Hegel and liberalism *Richard Bellamy* 325
95 Hegel's ambiguous legacy for modern liberalism *Charles Taylor* 345

Philosophy of History

96 Hegel's political theory and philosophy of history *Philip J. Kain* 361
97 Hegel and historicism *Stanley Rosen* 384
98 World history as the progress of consciousness: an interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history *Stephen Houlgate* 402

Philosophy of Art

99 The contemporary relevance of Hegel's aesthetics *Dieter Henrich, translated by Michael Inwood* 419
100 Extract from *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche Andrew Bowie* 427

Philosophy of Religion

101 Christianity and secularity in Hegel's concept of the state *Walter Jaeschke, translated by Willem de Vries* 461
102 Hegel's approach to religion: the dialectic of speculation and phenomenology *Peter C. Hodgson* 479
103 Hegel's critique of religion *B. C. Birchall* 494

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Introduction

Robert Stern

THE *PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE*

In setting out to comprehend Hegel's project as a whole, perhaps the most obvious question to ask regarding the second book of the *Encyclopaedia* is: what was Hegel's goal in the *Philosophy of Nature*? This question cannot be answered easily, however, as there is considerable room for dispute over the nature of Hegel's enterprise in this part of his system.

The first suggestion, which had its origins in the nineteenth century, is that Hegel wished to demonstrate how the structure of nature is determined by the system of concepts to be found in the *Logic*, which are ontologically prior to the natural world and transcend it as its cause. On this interpretation, the transition to the *Philosophy of Nature* is understood in quasi-Platonic terms, and Hegel is said to have viewed the material world as the real embodiment of the categorial-ontological forms discussed in the *Logic*. Thus, it is argued, Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* is just part of the tradition begun by Plato in the *Timaeus*, of showing how various natural phenomena and material structures come into being as the realization of some rational pattern; for Plato, this pattern was determined by the Forms, while for Hegel it is determined by the categories. So, in the *Timaeus* Plato tried to provide a rational explanation for there being five elements on the grounds that there are five regular solids to which these elements correspond;[1] likewise, Hegel attempts to provide an explanation for the fact that the solar system has three component parts (the central body, the dependent bodies and the relative central bodies) on the grounds that the Notion has three components (the universal, the particular and the individual), to which they can be correlated.[2] In this way, it appears, Hegel thought he could show that there is some

rational pattern and 'order of things' governed by the categorical structures of the *Logic*.[3]

However, it could be argued that Hegel is doing more in his *Philosophy of Nature* than indulging in fanciful Platonic cosmology, by trying to posit some rational pattern on which the universe is ordered. In fact, Hegel's purpose is somewhat different: namely, to show that the elements that make up the solar system (and other natural phenomena) have a certain interrelation, a structure of unity-in-difference, comparable to that of the categories of universal, particular and individual, so that it is possible to model the relation between these elements in terms taken from the *Logic*. Thus, on this account, Hegel's aim is simply to show that just as the categories of the Notion are dialectically interdependent, so too are certain aspects of the natural world, which explains why in this respect the structures of the former may be used to characterize the latter; but this does not make Hegel a speculative cosmologist, who believed that this characterization somehow showed that there is a set of ideal thought-forms which constitute the rational blue-print for the material world.

None the less, even if this is granted, it might be said that Hegel's approach in the *Philosophy of Nature* is still broadly Platonic, in that it performs a central function in his attack on empiricism and nominalism, which was begun in the *Logic*. Thus, it can be argued that in his account of the natural world Hegel treats certain ideal structures – such as laws and natural kinds – in a realist manner, and rejects the nominalist claim that they are merely our constructions, '*the Inventions and Creatures of the Understanding*, made by it for its own use';[4] he thereby shows himself to be a Platonic essentialist, for whom general, abstract objects have a primacy over the world of observable, concrete particulars:

> Nature shows us a countless number of individual forms and phenomena. Into this variety we feel the need of introducing unity: we compare, consequently, and try to find the universal of each single case . . . In thus characterizing the universal, we become aware of its antithesis to something else. This something else is the merely immediate, outward and individual, as opposed to the mediate, inward, and universal. The universal does not exist externally to the outward eye as a universal. The kind as kind cannot be perceived: the laws of the celestial motions are not written on the sky. The universal is neither seen nor heard, its existence is only for the mind. Religion leads us to a universal, which embraces all else within itself, to an Absolute by which all else is brought into being: and this Absolute is an object not of the senses but of the mind and of thought.[5]

Given passages such as this, it is unsurprising that much of Hegel's discussion of nature is apparently influenced by a form of Platonic realism.

For example, in his account of organic nature, Hegel argues that creatures are not properly classified according to merely superficial similarities, claiming that crucial to anything's existence is what kind of thing it is, and suggesting that individuals are merely finite because in them the genus universal is inadequately exemplified:[6] this would appear to support the suggestion that Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* was written to vindicate the idealist ontology of the *Logic*, by showing that in the natural world, the general and conceptual has priority over the particular and the material.

However, it could be argued that this interpretation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* is in error in so far as it misconstrues Hegel's basic intention in attacking nominalism and empiricism: the aim was not to defend Platonic idealism and the primacy of the general over the particular, but rather to suggest that in investigating the workings of the universe, thought must go beyond what is merely observable, and attain a more theory-laden understanding of nature. Thus, Hegel argues, sceptical empiricists like Hume were wrong to challenge the rationalist conception of nature as governed by universal principles and laws, just because they cannot be known via sense-perception;[7] only by rising above sense-perception in this manner can any science (including physics as well as *Naturphilosophie*) hope to uncover the way in which the world really works:

> Physics and natural history are regarded as eminently empirical sciences, as belonging exclusively to observation and experience, and as therefore opposed to the philosophy of nature, the cognition of nature by means of thought. It has in the first instance to be pointed out, however, that empirical physics contains much more thought than it will either realize or admit; that it is in fact better than it supposes, or if thought is considered to be a bad thing for it, that it is worse than it supposes. Physics and the philosophy of nature are therefore to be distinguished, not as perception and thought, but merely *by the nature and manner of their thought.* Both are a thinking cognition of nature.[8]

Hegel's claim against empiricism therefore seems to be this: any insight into the fundamental processes of nature must involve a form of theoretical comprehension that takes a step beyond sense, for thought is necessary in order to grasp the way in which nature operates. It does not of course follow that experience plays no role in our investigation of nature. For although (for example) causal relations are not given as such in perception (as Hume pointed out), it is none the less through perception that we can pick out those circumstances in which a casual relation obtains;

likewise, although forces are not discernible by sense-experience, it is thanks to perception that we see evidence of forces at work in the world.

This suggests a reading of the *Philosophy of Nature* which gives the *Logic* a rather different role in relation to the former, one that is less extravagantly metaphysical. On this account, Hegel's intention in the *Philosophy of Nature* was to examine how we come to posit certain determinations in our theoretical understanding of nature (such as gravitational force, latent heat, light particles), and to test these determinations in the light of the results of the *Logic*, to see whether these determinations can be warranted. It is argued that for Hegel, the empirical sciences go beyond experience in accordance with an inadequate set of categories, with the result that they frequently theorize about nature in the wrong way: it is his aim to check this tendency. Hegel therefore devotes a good deal of his *Philosophy of Nature* to attacking certain scientific hypotheses because, he maintains, they involve the application of the wrong category or set of categories, with the result that the phenomenon in question is misconceived: 'The task here is the same as that throughout the whole of the philosophy of nature; it it merely to replace the categories of the understanding by the thought-relationships of the speculative Notion, and to grasp and determine the phenomenon in accordance with the latter.'[9]

One advantage of adopting this approach is that it explains why Hegel gave a certain priority to philosophy over natural science, without having to attribute to him the questionable status of being an *a priori* metaphysician. Rather, the importance of philosophy stems from the fact that it can provide us with a more developed way of thinking about the categories employed within science, of showing how some categories may generate *aporiai*, and how such puzzles can be avoided:

> But there is a fundamental delusion in all scientific empiricism. It employs the metaphysical categories of matter, force, those of one, many, generality, infinity, etc.; following the clue given by these categories it proceeds to draw conclusions, and in so doing presupposes and applies the syllogistic form. And all the while it is unaware that it contains metaphysics – in wielding which, it makes use of those categories and their combinations in a style utterly thoughtless and uncritical.[10]

Thus, on this reading, the *Logic* is not some Platonic exercise in laying down a rational blue-print for nature, but rather a necessary preliminary examination of the categories which (as the *Philosophy of Nature* shows) form the basic framework for the hypotheses and theories of the empirical sciences. This reading clearly fits in well with the kind of non-metaphysical approach to the *Logic* outlined earlier.[11]

While this interpretation has the undoubted merit of putting Hegel's

project more in line with recent approaches in the philosophy of science,[12] and of giving it a much less outlandish air, it could be claimed that it overlooks the fact that Hegel's conception of nature arose out of his metaphysical conception of *Geist*, according to which 'nature [is] the precipitate of a cosmic spirit on the way to a fuller realization in self-consciousness',[13] and therefore neglects the vital role that Hegel's vision of spirit plays in his treatment of the natural world. Thus, it might be argued, Hegel's philosophy of spirit is what governs his *Naturphilosophie* and makes it distinctive; for it rests on the supposition that 'underlying natural reality is a spiritual principle striving to realize itself',[14] which is something that the non-metaphysical approach underplays and ignores.

Clearly, this interpretation grows out of a reading of Hegel's philosophy in which *Geist* is given a strongly cosmological interpretation in relation to nature, which none the less differs from those cosmological interpretations that are based primarily on the *Logic*: whereas the latter treat Hegel as a Platonist, according to whom the *Logic* constitutes a realm of Forms out of which nature is determined, the former treat him as a spirit-monist, who held that 'nature has its own place in reality . . . as an actual form of mind's manifestation'.[15] While the Platonic reading apparently derives textual support from the transition from Logic to nature, those who view Hegel as a spirit-monist turn to the transition from nature to spirit to provide evidence for their approach:

> This is the *transition from natural being into spirit*; nature has found its consummation in living being, and has made its peace by shifting into a higher sphere. Spirit has therefore issued forth from nature. The purpose of nature is to extinguish itself, and to break through its rind of immediate and sensuous being, to consume itself like a Phoenix in order to emerge from this externality rejuvenated as spirit . . . It is precisely because spirit constitutes the end of nature, that it is *antecedent* to it. Nature has gone forth from spirit; it has not done this empirically, however, for while it presupposes nature, it is already constantly contained within it . . . The aim of these lectures [i.e. the *Philosophy of Nature*] is to convey an image of nature, in order to subdue this Proteus: to find in the externality only the mirror of ourselves, to see in nature a free reflection of spirit: to understand God, not in the contemplation of spirit, but in this His immediate existence.[16]

It is claimed that passages such as these only make sense if Hegel's intention was to show that there is a spiritual principle inherent in nature which is striving to realize itself, and that this goal is achieved in the transition from nature to mind. Thus, on this reading, Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* is said to be structured in order to show how nature works towards

the development of mind, while nature must be transcended if spirit is to exist in an adequate form.

If this interpretation of Hegel's position is correct, it raises a number of questions regarding his *Philosophy of Nature*. First of all, it gives the latter a strongly teleological structure, according to which 'nature . . . must . . . be conceived of as pointing to spirit, working toward its own fulfillment in the complete actuality of spirit'.[17] However, if this is what Hegel believed, he provided little evidence to support this claim. Of course, it has often been assumed that teleological thinking plays a vital but shadowy role throughout Hegel's system, from his *Naturphilosophie* to his philosophy of history: but here this strongly teleological position seems remarkably unsubstantiated. Second, like the Platonic reading of the *Logic*, this interpretation gives Hegel's account creationist pretensions, but this time by treating nature as the posting of spirit: but Hegel's project then looks extremely dubious if interpreted in these terms. Third, it must be explained why Hegel thought that spirit could not realize itself in nature, and therefore why human consciousness is necessary to the development of *Geist*; it could be argued, however, that the answer to this question is to be found not in his *Philosophy of Nature*, but in his *Philosophy of Spirit*, to which it is therefore necessary to turn.

THE *PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRIT*

At first glance, it might perhaps seem that in the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel's system breaks up into a number of isolated discussions of separate issues – philosophy of mind, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics and so on – without these discussions being very closely connected to Hegel's system as a whole. None the less, it is clear on closer inspection that Hegel's treatment of these issues is governed by his overall philosophical framework, and that this determines how the third and final book of the *Encyclopaedia* should be read; but of course, given the different interpretations of that framework which have emerged, there is little agreement on what form that understanding should take.

To those who accept the sort of reading that has just been discussed, for whom nature is an inadequate realization of cosmic spirit, the third book of the *Encyclopaedia* is treated as the climax of spirit's struggle to find adequate expression for itself, which it does in human consciousness. On this reading, therefore, the development that takes place in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, from the most rudimentary form of consciousness to the highest form of Absolute Mind, is governed by the goal of spirit, which is to make itself fully manifest in the world:

> The general structure of the universe . . . is thus determined by virtue

> of its being the embodiment and expression of *Geist*. It includes a hierarchy of beings from the lowest inanimate forms through various kinds of living species to man. And then, of course, for the realization of *Geist*, man has to develop . . . So that there is also a hierarchy of cultural forms and modes of consciousness which succeed each other in time and make up human history. The articulation of the universe in space and time can be deduced from the requirements of a cosmic spirit which must be embodied and expressed in it. Even different stages of human history can be derived as necessary, from the nature of man's starting point in raw, uncultivated existence and the consummation he is heading towards.[18]

According to this interpretation, Hegel's intention in the *Philosophy of Spirit* is to show *Geist* coming to full self-expression, which is not possible in nature, but is possible via human consciousness, which ends up by seeing itself as a vehicle of *Geist*, as that in which *Geist* achieves its highest embodiment.

In what sense is human consciousness the highest embodiment of *Geist*? On this reading, one answer is that in us, *Geist* achieves its goal, which is to be brought to consciousness: in us, that in which *Geist* is embodied *knows* that this is the case, as we are aware of ourselves as manifestations of *Geist*, in a way that nature was not. Of course, we are not aware of this *immediately*: human consciousness must undergo a process of development, mapped out in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, before this knowledge dawns. Thus, on this account, many of the episodes in the *Philosophy of Spirit* are interpreted in these terms. For example, it is suggested that Hegel's discussion of ethical life and political institutions in the section on 'Objective Spirit' (which is elaborated in more detail in the *Philosophy of Right*) is designed to show how 'the state is the real expression of that universal life which is the necessary embodiment . . . for the vision of the Absolute':[19] in other words, it is by feeling themselves to be part of the community of the state that individuals come to a growing recognition that they are connected to a larger whole. This is more fully acknowledged in art, religion and philosophy, which constitute the final stages of consciousness' development, and through which (it is argued) 'man becomes aware of the structuring activity of Spirit in the world and is able to make its operations in human life explicit'.[20]

Faced with the difficulty of making sense of this spirit-monism, however, other interpreters have argued that this reading misconceives the goal that Hegel gives to human consciousness in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, which is not to reach an apprehension of itself as a vehicle for absolute *Geist*, but rather to act as the means by which the rationality of the world comes to be known.[21] This reading seems to accord with the role that

Hegel gives to *Geist* in his account of the relation between the three parts of his system presented in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

> Then, in the second place, *Geist*, which we know as the principle of individuality, or as the actualizing principle, is the mean; and Nature and the Logical Idea are the extremes. It is *Geist* which discerns (*erkennt*) the Logical Idea in Nature and which thus raises Nature to its essence.[22]

This suggest that *Geist* is not some cosmic entity, seeking adequate embodiment for itself by positing nature and finite minds, but rather something we become, in so far as we bring to light the rationality of the real. Nature by itself is unable to achieve this, as nature cannot know itself to be rational, as it lacks any consciousness: this only becomes possible with the coming into being of minds that are capable of reflective awareness, and intellectual inquiry into what is.[23]

On this interpretation, the *Philosophy of Spirit* shows the human intellect advancing towards the most complete consciousness of reason in the world, which comes in philosophical comprehension. Prior to that, we come to feel the rationality of the real in a non-conceptual fashion, through art and religion, while we struggle to embody that rationality within our political structures, and to act in accordance with reason in our ethical life. Considered in this way, the *Philosophy of Spirit* is the culmination of Hegel's thoroughly rationalistic system, the goal of which is to find some internal principle of order and coherence which will render the world fully comprehensible and intelligible to consciousness, and so allow us to attain the standpoint of Absolute Mind. In so doing, it is argued, Hegel wished to show how the estrangement of consciousness from being can be overcome, once consciousness sees how the latter is rationally determined in accordance with the categories of the *Logic*; and at this point the system returns us once again to the first book of the *Encyclopaedia*.

It could be argued, however, that this reading, like the previous one, is problematic, in continuing to treat the human mind as if it had some cosmic goal or purpose, by giving consciousness a vital role to play in bringing the development of Hegel's system to its culmination. While this approach conforms to the traditional reading of Hegel as a speculative rationalist, opponents of such traditional readings would claim that it does not capture what is really significant about Hegel's achievement in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, which is to bring about a critical transformation of our ordinary thought about ourselves, in an attempt to find a new way of conceiving who we are and how we should live. Inspired by the non-metaphysical interpretations that have been offered of the *Logic*, while rejecting any cosmological conception of *Geist*, proponents of this reading

continue to treat Hegel as a category theorist, who is simply looking for a better way of conceptualizing the realm of spirit, based on the earlier findings of the *Logic*.

On this account, therefore, Hegel moved from the second book of the *Encyclopaedia* to the third simply because he believed that the categories appropriate to the natural realm are not appropriate to the understanding of spirit, and that in order to conceptualize the latter adequately, we must think in radically different terms. To ordinary consciousness, however, this is bound to prove difficult, as most ordinary ways of thinking are incapable of the kind of dialectical sophistication required in order to render spirit comprehensible: ordinary thinking is too bound to atomistic, oppositional and reductionist models in its approach, and so finds it hard to come to terms with the kind of unity-in-difference characteristic of the spiritual realm. Hegel treats this structure of unity-in-difference as fundamental for spirit, however, and tries to show how spirit can be both simple and complex, conscious and embodied, free and determined, individual and social, in a way that only becomes intelligible if one adopts his speculative approach to the categories. In this way, for example, he suggest that the traditional mind–body problem can be resolved:

> But when we leave *feeling* behind us and go to *reflection*, the opposition of soul and matter, of my subjective 'I' and its bodily nature, becomes for us a fixed opposition, and the reciprocal relation of body and soul becomes an interaction of independent entities. The usual physiological and psychological treatment does not know how to overcome the fixity of this opposition. In that treatment, the 'I' as absolutely simple and unitary, this abyss of all general ideas and representations, and Matter as the Many, the Composite, confront each other as sheer opposites, and the answer to the question: How is this Many united with that abstract One, is naturally declared to be impossible . . . [However,] *Speculative* logic lifts us above the whole of this merely reflective mode of treatment simply by showing that all those categories applied to the soul like Thing, Simplicity, Indivisibility, One, are untrue and switch round into their opposites. But the Philosophy of Mind continues this proof of the untruth of the categories of the abstractive intellect (*Verstand*) by demonstrating how mind, by its ideality, annuls every fixed category in it.[24]

Passages such as this suggest that for Hegel, spirit is discussed after nature, not because the former constitutes the culmination of some teleological development, but because it conforms to the logic of the concept rather than that of being or essence, or (in other words) that there is another level of conceptual advance required by spirit if it is to comprehend itself adequately and without *aporiai*.

It remains a matter for more detailed analysis to determine how far any attempt to use Hegel's speculative logic can resolve the problems covered in his *Philosophy of Spirit*. In this way, the last book of the *Encyclopaedia* becomes a genuine test for this approach: for unless his speculative logic can be shown to *work*, as a method for resolving the philosophical difficulties raised, then we have (on the categorial reading) little reason to accept it. It is certainly true that what Hegel has to say about the traditional problems of philosophy – both theoretical and practical – remains very suggestive, while his dialectical strategy provides a manner of thinking about these problems in a way that may escape the one-sidedness and inadequacy of many current views. This perhaps explains why recent commentators have placed greater and greater emphasis on this approach to Hegel's project: for in his dialectical response to the problems posed by the phenomenon of consciousness, by the nature of freedom, by the authority of the state over the individual, by the question of the incarnation and so on, Hegel's approach gets us away from many of the difficulties these issues raise.

If, however, we allow Hegel to 'speak to us' now as a category theorist, and reject many of the more traditional readings and criticisms of his work, it can scarcely be assumed that this leaves all aspects of his thought accounted for. To some, this will be seen as evidence for unclarity and ambiguity in his ideas, that he failed to make his philosophical outlook fully articulate. To others, this will show that the remarkable synthesis of themes that make up his work was only possible for Hegel in his time, and cannot be properly grasped in ours. For myself, I would argue that while his final vision may continue to remain elusive, it is a mark of Hegel's greatness that there is a continuing desire to strive towards it: for, his work occupies a space in the map of philosophical ideas, beyond more familiar territory, where there are still fruitful discoveries to be made.

Notes

1 See Plato, *Timaeus*, 55d ff.

2 'As it constitutes the third sphere, the planet concludes and completes the whole. This quadruplicity of celestial bodies forms the completed system of rational corporeality. It is necessary to a solar system, and is the developed disjunction of the Notion. These four spheres between them show forth the moments of the Notion within the heavens' (G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, translated by Michael John Petry, 3 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), §270Z, I, p. 279). Hegel refers to a 'quadruplicity' because he is here distinguishing between the lunar and cometary bodies: but they both together seem to correspond to the category of particularity.

3 Compare the following passage from Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*: 'If, for example, three natural realms are identified, the mineral, the vegetable, the

animal, then in this series we see forshadowed a universally necessary articulation in accordance with the Concept [*Begriff*], without abiding by the mere idea of an external purposefulness. Even in the multiplicity of products within these three realms, sensuous observation divines a rationally ordered advance, in the different geological formations, and in the series of vegetable and animal species. Similarly, the individual animal organism – this insect with its subdivisions into head, breast, belly and extremities – is envisaged as an inherently rational articulation, and in the five senses, although at first sight they may seem to be just an accidental plurality, there is likewise found a correspondence with the Concept' (G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, translated by T. M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), I, p. 129).

4 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited with a Foreword by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Book III, Chapter iii, §11, p. 414

5 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), §21Z, p. 34. See also: 'This universality of things is not something subjective and belonging to us; it is, rather, the noumenon as opposed to the transient phenomenon, the truth, objectivity, and actual being of the things themselves. It resembles the platonic ideas, which do not have their being somewhere in the beyond, but which exist in individual things as substantial genera' (Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §246Z, I, p. 200).

6 See Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §246Z, I, p. 201: 'The empirical view of nature has this category of universality in common with the philosophy of nature, but it oscillates between regarding it as subjective, and regarding it as objective, and one often hears that these classes and orders are only formulated for the convenience of cognition. This uncertainty is even more apparent when distinguishing features are looked for not because it is thought that they are the essential objective determinations of things, but because they are a convenient way for us to distinguish things. If there were nothing more to it than this, one could for example select the earlobe as a distinctive feature of humanity, for no animal has it. One feels immediately however that such a determination is inadequate to the cognition of the essential nature of man.'

7 'Hume assumes the truth of the empirical element, feeling and sensation, and proceeds to challenge universal principles and laws, because they have no warranty from sense-perception. So far was ancient scepticism from making feeling and sensation the canon of truth, that it turned against the deliverances of sense first of all' (Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §39, p. 64).

8 Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §244Z, I, p. 193.

9 Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §305, II, p. 88.

10 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §38, p. 62.

11 See above, Introduction to Volume III, pp. 8–11.

12 This is broadly the approach favoured by Gerd Buchdahl: see below, pp. 15–40.

13 Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 45.

14 Ibid., p. 39 See also M. J. Inwood, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 1–2: 'In rough outline . . . [Hegel] saw the world as a whole on the model of mind, a mind which, as it were, projects an object ("nature") of which it can be *conscious*. This object develops by stages into men, and they become conscious not only, in various ways, of nature but of the cosmic mind itself and of its relationship to nature. The emergence of men and the growth of their understanding

represents the increasing *self-consciousness* of the cosmic mind. This self-conscious is completed by Hegel's own system, in which the whole process has become entirely transparent to us.'

15 Errol E. Harris, 'The philosophy of nature in Hegel's system,' *Review of Metaphysics*, 3 (1949), pp. 213–28, p. 222.

16 Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, §376Z, III, pp. 212–13. See also: 'Nature is the Idea, but only implicitly. That is why *Schelling* called it a petrified intelligence, which others have even said is frozen. God does not remain petrified and moribund however, the stones cry out and lift themselves up to spirit' (ibid., §247Z, I, p. 206). For a recent discussion of Hegel's transitions from Idea to nature and nature to spirit, see Dieter Wanschneider and Vittorio Hösle, 'Die Entäußerung der Idee zur Natur und ihre zeitliche Entfaltung als Geist bei Hegel', *Hegel-Studien*, 18 (1983), pp. 173–99.

17 Willem A. de Vries, *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 47

18 Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 91.

19 Ibid., p. 366.

20 Raymond Plant, *Hegel* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 134.

21 See Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 180: '*Geist* is reason – being itself – become self-conscious. However, it is clear that, for Hegel, being only becomes conscious in and as *human* consciousness. *We* are the consciousness and self-consciousness of being, of absolute reason itself. There is, therefore, only one *Geist* for Hegel – absolute *Geist*, self-conscious rational existence – and we, as it were, are its head. Absolute *Geist* is not a mysterious cosmic entity to which we are subject; it is simply being itself become conscious of its own intrinsic rationality in and as *us*.' Cf. below, p. 410.

22 Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, §187Z, p. 251; translation modified.

23 'The movement of the solar system is governed by unalterable laws; these laws are its inherent reason. But neither the sun nor the planets which revolve around it in accordance with these laws are conscious of them. It is man who abstracts the laws from empirical reality and acquires knowledge of them' (G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in History*, translated by H. B. Nisbet, with an introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 34).

24 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), §389, pp. 31–2. For a further discussion of this issue, see my 'Kant, Hegel and the place of the subject', *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (1990), pp. 183–91.

Philosophy of Nature

Hegel's philosophy of nature and the structure of science

Gerd Buchdahl

I

At first sight Hegel may seem an unusual choice to help us throw further light upon modern problems concerning the structure of scientific foundations. His main sources are not those that inform the writings in this domain of scholarship of our own day: pre-Socratics, Aristotle; the Mystics; Kepler, Newton; Spinoza, Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Also, there is the very personal style of language, expressing in a definitive way what is meant only as a suggestion, perhaps a half-way stage in the argument, if indeed there is argument at all, instead of visionary exploration of suggestive pictures – a sort of sculpturing in print. Moreover, to become more specific, to the modern philosopher of science, Hegel's general scheme presents a perspective that appears foreign to present-day thought, evaluating the sciences quasi-teleologically in the light of other, non-scientific, departments of knowledge, employing a curious amalgam of logical concepts to appraise scientific foundations, where the science involved – though Hegel moved within this edifice with astonishing dexterity and a formidable breadth of knowledge ([13], pp. 128–41, for Hegel's scientific sources) – was that of the years of 1790 to 1810. It was a period in which the structure of dynamics, to be sure, was being codified and re-evaluated in the writings of Laplace and Lagrange, thus ushering in a relatively stable era of achievement. On the other hand, in the remaining branches of natural science, chemistry, electromagnetism, biological and geological inquiry, much was still in flux and relative confusion. There were here hence obvious dangers that would face a writer like Hegel, who was attempting to utilize these scientific images and views to give content to his researches of logical principle; especially since nothing would be more normal than to expect a creative mind of Hegel's stature to utilize the basic logical framework which he was to

fashion for the purpose of subjecting scientific attitudes and theories of his day – by no means at that time visibly fixed for ever – to criticism and analysis.

But if these were dangers for Hegel, they present similar difficulties to the modern reader who is not acquainted with these periods of scientific history, and who mistakes Hegel's often quite justified critical excursions into the science of his time as mistaken applications of a dogmatic logic, when in fact they are a living dialogue between the problematical stages of science in flux and a mind that attempts to interpret these stages in the light of an underlying structure that is meant to bestow a relative degree of intelligibility as well as legitimacy upon a shifting scene.

And there are further difficulties that bar the way towards understanding Hegel in this sphere. Thus, to the modern Anglo-Saxon scholar, there appears to be a curious lack of concern with epistemological issues. Likewise, there is a relative absence of deductive reasoning; that Hegel's *Logic* does not present us with a deductively articulated enterprise is by now common knowledge, though this fact makes it all the more difficult to appreciate that the network of the *Logic* is, partly at least, directed towards an articulation of scientific knowledge, with which it is often surprisingly closely interwined – we shall meet with some examples in what follows. Indeed, as I shall try to explain, there is the very difficulty of grasping the relation between the network and the actual theories and scientific laws and data of science; difficulties which have led most old-style commentators to cast Hegel in the role of the *a priori* thinker who seeks to spin scientific conclusions from reflections in the realm of logic. Closer inspection will reveal not only that such an impression is for the most part false as a matter of fact ([13], pp. 49–53 for the few *actual* mistakes Hegel made), but that it also betrays an attitude of uncomprehension *vis-à-vis* Hegel's general attempt to fashion 'foundations of science'; or better: to give a novel interpretation (though *we* would want to say: one among many possible alternatives) of what precisely one is to understand by 'foundations'.

Another impediment for the modern philosopher of science who tries to come to grips with Hegel is the fact that the latter does not discuss most of the concepts and problems that form the normal stock-in-trade of the modern textbook in ways and in an order that would make the subject easily accessible; and the emphases are different. Thus, though induction and analogy are discussed, if only cursorily, where a modern treatment might follow this up with a discussion of the status of scientific laws, and the interrelation between induction, analogy and law (as is done, for instance, in a typical work such as Goodman's *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*), what Hegel has to say about lawlikeness in general, as well as the status of certain particular scientific laws, at least of the fundamental kind, occurs under altogether different and widely separated

pigeon-holes. This is so, partly, because the discussion of these various concepts occurs where Hegel believes it to fit most naturally into the classificatory scheme provided by the ascending ladder of his categorial concepts, and partly because some of the discussions occur in the context of the domain of the *Logic*, whilst others are fitted into the *Philosophy of Nature*.

Nor is this all. Contrary to the logical habits of our modern philosopher, Hegel is not much concerned with the kind of investigation normally encountered under such headings as 'causation', 'force', 'induction', 'law'. Thus, he does not set out to 'justify' induction, or the reality of force, or the status of lawlikeness. Rather, having placed these concepts at some definite place within his categorial scheme, and having there articulated the various internal 'splits' which they suffer, he is satisfied if some idiosyncratic activity of analysis can show how certain categories that precede those in question 'necessarily' lead up to the later ones; and again, how the latter, just like the former, in virtue of being involved in a dialectic tensional reaction with their opposites, force the philosopher to move on to the next higher stage of dialectical articulation. True, Hegel does discuss the meanings of at least some of these concepts, space, time, motion, force, matter etc., as they emerge from, or fit naturally into, this general dialectical approach. But there is no strictly epistemological inquiry; rather, we are furnished with an intensive showing forth of the articulated structure of the language of our world, as involved in this dialectical ascent. In so far as Hegel is concerned with 'foundations of science', in our sense of the term, this is construed as a 'determination from or of the Notion' that happens to be in question, where by 'Notion' we must understand simply both the parts and the whole of that categorial structure of the whole of reality which, when the totality of dialectically viewed concepts is fed into this, becomes the fully fledged Idea.

It will be seen that just pointing to some of the bars to an understanding of Hegel as a philosopher of science has involved us in presenting a short, though very rudimentary sketch of Hegel's philosophical method and intentions, with most of the details of course left out. The little that has been mentioned was intended, however, to give the direction of our discussion a desired turn, to emphasize my concern here with 'foundations of science', and more generally, with the structure of criteria for, and the methodological components of, scientific theory. Moreover, in order to put some flesh on these Hegelian bones, I will on the one hand relate this account to certain intellectual episodes that preceded Hegel, and which – I shall contend – vitally influenced him, whilst on the other hand interpreting all this in the light of more recent concerns; indicating, where possible, in what for us lies the interest of the Hegelian corpus. I shall of course have to be selective, and argue my case merely in terms of just

a few examples, taken from this corpus, although I hope that the resulting concentration of effort will enable us to see something of the relevance of the discussion better than would a more wide-ranging enterprise.

One aspect of Hegel's presentation is important here. Hegel, in the interest of a 'correct' interpretation of some of the basic concepts of science, such as space, time, matter, force, atom etc., is not (as I have already indicated) afraid of subjecting contemporary treatments to a searching, and frequently highly negative, critique. Thus his 'paradigm' (if I may call it that) of astronomical dynamics does not embrace the postulation of forces regarded as ultimate explanatory agencies. The way in which he builds up the edifice of space, time, gravity etc. – some of the details I shall present later – is not such as to provide room for forces as quasi-reified agencies. Of course, this was not entirely arbitrary. Partly, it is due to influences stemming from the developments in the formulation of dynamical theory during the period immediately preceding Hegel's own, especially in the work of Lagrange, which he admired greatly. This, too, awards only a derivatory place to force – roughly in a way later presented formally in the work of Heinrich Hertz – and instead seeks to present a systematic articulation of empirical results at the phenomenal level; the kind of approach subsequently labelled as 'phenomenological' by Ernst Mach, as contrasted with 'substantival' theory-types, involving reference to underlying explanatory entities. Eventually, as we shall see, these specific preferences for certain theory-types came to be generalized as a special expression of Hegel's more fundamental underlying scheme. Thus, we shall discover that Hegel's interpretation of 'force' is so contrived as to obviate the 'underlying entity' picture of that concept.

II

Here I must digress for a moment in a more general direction. For this domination of scientific research by preferences for certain *types* of explanations forcibly reminds us (as being one aspect) of the drift of certain influential approaches in the philosophy of science of more recent vintage. Here, too, we meet with an emphasis on conceptual frameworks, on generalized paradigm situations, dominating, both by selection and rejection, what used to be called 'the sensory basis', the observational and experimental ground, of scientific theories. Scientific development is interpreted not so much in the light of accumulation of observational facts, but rather as the change of the conceptual substructure. Also, just as in the case of the earlier idealist reaction (from Kant to Hegel and Bradley) to previous empiricist standpoints, interest with induction and its foundations, not to mention problems of confirmation, is given little currency, in favour of an emphasis on concerns with the structure of

theory as a whole, and the way this dominates the empirical basis. We need only remind ourselves of recent 'idealist' tendencies to stress the theory-ladenness of observation language, and indeed, of its entire dependence on theory. In a related vein, there have been a host of writers, for example, Harré, Holton, Kuhn, Schlesinger among philosophers, and Meyerson, Koyré, Butterfield among historians of science, who have stressed that scientific progress takes place in terms of a change of 'thinking-cap', and that each scientific paradigm has its own conceptual framework, which – just as much as any sensory basis – is introduced to sanction the acceptance of individual empirical hypotheses. And there have of course been even more radical tendencies, on the part of Paul Feyerabend and his followers, to emphasize the relative circularity of theorizing, in relation to the empirical data, and the resulting need of viewing progress as the battle-ground between competing theories, the criterion of success being defined only in purely pragmatic terms.

Perhaps such extreme subjectivist tendencies have gone a little too far, but what remains is the result – supported also by recent ways of interpreting the 'solution' of the 'problem of induction', for instance on the part of Goodman and Quine, in terms of a notion of 'entrenchment' which links the latter back to scientific theory (see [14], ch. 5) – what remains, I say, is the resultant impression that a theory is relatively *underdetermined* by what, pragmatically speaking at least, we may call its observational basis.

Slightly more formally, I shall say that theories are underdetermined with respect to their 'physical component', meaning by this the empirical data, inductively processed in terms of laws which may in turn be systematically interconnected in the form of theories, though perhaps not necessarily in any explicit fashion.

Of course, this idea of underdetermination is not new. There are additional criteria, let us call them 'protophysical', which have frequently been called in as aids towards decisions concerning acceptance of some hypothesis. For instance, regulative notions like 'simplicity', 'continuity', 'symmetry' have – since the time of Leibniz and Kant, if not earlier – been claimed to play a vital part in such decision procedures. What is new is the claim we might add that this component is not just a heuristic aid, but a vital condition defining, not just acceptance, but acceptability of theories. If you define the notion of theoretical truth sufficiently widely, you might be prepared to say that this component is just as much 'truth-generating' as the more traditional 'physical' type – a position that seems to be implicit in the work of such divergent writers as Kant in the eighteenth, William Whewell in the nineteenth, and S. F. Barker and T. Kuhn in the twentieth century.

Whewell, for instance, *defines* the logic of induction (here regarded as truth-generating) as a methodological structure that includes colligation

of facts into laws and theories (our physical component), as well as the *simplification* of the resulting theories, by lining them up as levels in a hierarchical structure of theories, such that the lower-level ones will display what he calls a 'consilience of inductions'. We may call this the 'regulative' branch of our protophysical component. But he adds another, more important component, which he calls 'explication of conceptions', effected under the guidance of certain 'fundamental ideas' (space, time, cause, medium, substance, symmetry etc.): a kind of informal determination of meanings of the theoretical concepts involved, which may be temporally prior to or contemporaneous with the development of a given theory, or hierarchy of theories. Such matters as our 'correct' understanding of concepts like matter, force, space, time, motion are the subject of such explications, and they in part determine whether a given scientific formulation is acceptable or, to use the Kantian term, possible. Also, in this historical process of explication, the fundamental ideas in some way serve as selectors as well as justifications of what is ultimately acceptable.

The problems which these formulations involve are of course connected with what is often called 'the metaphysical foundations of science'. My own classification of 'physical' and 'protophysical', the latter including the two branches of 'regulative' and 'explicative', is meant to stabilize the notion of 'metaphysical foundations'. The protophysical component provides a slightly finer, and also more universal and conservative, structure than the more concrete recent notion of 'paradigm formation', which is somewhat too amorphous, at once too general and too specific, to serve for this purpose.

Now I want, furthermore, to maintain that the significance and status of such components can be clarified by comparing them, not only with recent, but also with earlier formulations, with attempts to provide metaphysical or rational foundations. For the elusive nature of this component makes it necessary to define its intellectual boundaries in as many directions as possible, and therefore also to follow up its function in the great philosophical enterprises of the past. But here, only a relatively close inspection of some key examples, as in what follows, can hope to clarify some of the problems involved. It is indeed one of the theses implied in this paper that such a relativist-historicist approach, highlighting very *different* interpretations of 'conceptual' and 'metaphysical' foundations, can importantly clarify our whole notion of such 'foundations' in general.

III

There are two such interpretations that will be my chief concern here: that of Hegel and, because this can itself be made intelligible only by linking it back to a 'metaphysical' approach that so vitally influenced the

latter, however different it may appear at first sight, the approach of Kant.

Kant's philosophy of science was really the first to exhibit something like a threefold structure of criteria, and my own classification is of course the result of an interpretation of Kant's intentions. Kant distinguishes first of all a 'physical' component (he calls it 'constitutive') which determines the 'probability' of a hypothesis and its accompanying theoretical concepts, the assessment of the probability depending on standard inductive procedures. The second component, involving regulative ideas and maxims, determines what we might call 'the rationale' – though Kant has no special label for this – of the theoretical concepts. Thus, the consilience of the different lawlike parts of gravitational theory powerfully reinforces the rationale of the concept of gravitational attraction in Kant's view (see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A662/B690; *Prolegomena*, para. 38; also [8], pp. 512–16).[1]

The third, and for us here the most important component, is what Kant calls 'metaphysical', as expounded in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. This component determines the 'possibility' – by which Kant of course means 'real, physical', not 'logical', possibility – of a scientific theoretical concept. Thus, in the *Foundations* Kant attempts to demonstrate the possibility of the concepts of velocity and their composition, matter and force, mass, inertia and momentum. Since this will give us the lead-up to Hegel, I shall briefly look at one of these, historically the most important of Kant's cases, that of matter and its attractive and repulsive forces.

Kant here sought to resolve the puzzle of Newtonian attraction-across-distance, and to provide for it an intelligibility denied to it by a large part of the scientific and philosophical community between Newton's time and his own, and certainly by Newton himself. Now to demonstrate the possibility of something in this context means to subject our empirical consciousness of the concept in question, here: the concept of 'matter', to a conceptual analysis; for instance, to analyse matter as the movable in space, as what takes up space, as what exerts moving force etc. Furthermore, this is an analysis that has to proceed under the guidance of the categorial classification familiar from the First *Critique*. Thus in the present case, the sub-divisions of the category of quality are employed in the development of the analytical aspect of matter as filling space. For this category is further explicated, first, as exerting repulsive force *vis-à-vis* any other part of matter seeking to occupy this space (corresponding to the subcategory of reality), second, as thereby necessarily requiring attractive force (category negation), and, finally, as providing for the balance between these two forces, whereby matter actually 'fills space' (category of limitation).

Lack of space of course forbids any extended discussion of this

procedure here. Let us only note a few special features. Evidently this *is* a kind of 'explication' of concepts, and it is an explication, moreover, which begins – as Kant expressly notes – with an *empirical* concept, viz. matter. The empirical content – indeed, its interpretation as implying the quasi-emanation of repulsive and attractive forces – is heavily indebted to scientific, and hence empirical, developments. The only difference from Newtonian approaches is that attraction is not 'added' subsequently, by way of 'mere hypothesis', as a 'foreign' ingredient, to a concept which by the Newtonians had been expressly asserted to exclude the property of attraction from its 'essence', but that it is part of the conceptual explication of matter itself. Matter has now become what acts; it *is* where it acts; not: it acts where it is. And with this, many of the puzzles of action-at-a-distance seemed of course to fade away (see my [9], pp. 74–102).

What then is '*a priori*' about this metaphysics? In the present case, basically, the conformity to the categorial framework. If the category could be said to 'justify' this construction, this could, however, only mean that it serves as a guarantee for the analysis having been *tied down* to the fundamental categorial framework which had previously been shown to pervade 'possible experience in general', and making such an 'experience' possible. But that was an epistemological concern; the present, metaphysical concern, is quite different. The category now no longer makes the construct 'possible' in the old, deep, sense of the transcendental deducation. It only forms a conceptual mould, to apply to the analysis of the physicist's concept. 'Possibility' here means applying the categories to the empirical concept in such a way as to allow of the application of mathematical construction. This must be what Kant means by providing a 'metaphysical foundation' (see also my [11]).

IV

Here we have the chance of one of those precious possibilities of a genuine link-up between Kant and Hegel, yielding a powerful key for an understanding of Hegel's method; although it should be mentioned that this immensely influential piece of Kantian metaphysics, in the interval between Kant and Hegel, had formed an important base also for the idea of the main *Naturphilosophen*, especially Schelling and Baader, where the interpretation of matter in terms of opposing forces likewise received central attention. But Hegel seeks to go back to Kant's basic approach. And here, our present example was evidently seminal. I will not maintain that historically Hegel began with reflections on this case of the explication of matter alone, and then allowed the rest of his dialectical and categorial procedure to fan out from this. It is sufficient to provide here

a logical reconstruction, particularly as it affects Hegel's conception of the task of a Philosophy of Nature.

The importance which Hegel attaches to Kant's explication or construction of the concepts of matter and force can be gleaned from the assessment he makes in the *Science of Logic*[2] and in the *Philosophy of Nature*, where, in the course of his evolutionary method of dialectically building up the whole complex of structured reality, with its 'levels, hierarchies and spheres' (see [13], pp. 21ff.), of what he calls 'the Notion', he arrives at a sub-department of the Notion, in the *Logic* dealt with under the heading of 'Being-for-self' [*Fürsichsein*], and to which in the *Philosophy of Nature* there corresponds the section entitled 'Matter and Motion'. Thus, in the *Science of Logic* Hegel remarks on Kant's method that

> this metaphysical exposition of a subject [*sc.* the concept of matter] which not only itself but also in its determinations seemed to belong only to *experience* is noteworthy . . . because as an experiment with the Notion it at least gave the impulse to the more recent philosophy of nature, to a philosophy which does not make nature as given in sense-perception the basis of science, but which goes to the absolute Notion for its determinations.
>
> ([1], i, p. 170; [5], p. 179)

Similarly, in the *Philosophy of Nature* he writes:

> By his attempt at so-called *construction* of matter in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant has, among other things, also the merit of having made a beginning with the *notion* of matter, and of having revived with this attempt, the concept of a *Philosophy of Nature*.
>
> ([3], p. 68; [4], p. 45)

The great advance of the Kantian procedure, when compared with that of its predecessors, says Hegel, was that it does not posit matter first, and then 'implants' in it the various forces as something '*alien* to it and *contingent*, something introduced into it from outside' ([3], p. 64), but that instead, matter is here conceived as involving essentially the power to repel and to attract, which thus becomes a conceptual aspect of matter from the outset. Whatever deficiencies Kant's construction may have had, it has the inestimable merit of seeking 'to understand and grasp [*erkennen*] matter from these two opposed determinations as its fundamental forces' ([1], i, p. 173).

But, in Hegel's opinion, there are of course also serious deficiencies in Kant's method. For, first, Kant's procedure, he charges, is too empirical; it 'reflects on experience', and '*perceiving* certain determinations'

(i.e. forces), it only subsequently makes these foundations of the phenomenon ([1], i, p. 171). Second, its matter as well as the two forces are still regarded by Kant as 'self-subsistent' entities. That is to say,

> they are not connected with one another through their own nature, i.e. they are considered not as moments, each of which ought to pass over into its opposite, but rather [wrongly] each as fixed vis-à-vis the other.
>
> ([1], i, p. 170)

Again, the forces, though coming together in matter, are still regarded as independent (or 'free'), instead of possessing their ontological status merely in virtue of the being of matter.

V

How, then, does Hegel's own construal of matter and force compare with Kant's? As in Kant, attraction and repulsion are essential moments of the concept of matter, only interrelated more intimately, as we might expect from Hegel's critical remarks; part of the process of each of them either passing into its opposite, or being an element that emerges from a level of opposing moments on to the next higher level or sphere in the hierarchy of categories. Again, as in Kant, the exposition of the concept in question, the demonstration of its 'possibility', as Kant had called it, proceeds in conformity with the categorial framework, except that the latter is construed on a far richer basis than Kant's. But essentially the procedure is the same: 'Determination of the Notion' is the positioning of a concept at some point of the categorial network, albeit by Hegel regarded as being in a process of dialectical flux; 'the self-effacement [*das Sich-Aufheben*] of each finite determination and its transmutation into its opposite', as he characterizes 'the dialectical moment' in the *Logic* ([2], p. 151).

Finally, it is less 'empirical', in the Kantian sense. For repulsion and attraction appear first, not by way of 'empirical analysis', but at the level of the 'logic', as aspects or moments of 'being-for-self', where at most they are treated as purely 'pictorial expressions' of a strictly logical process (see [2], p. 192; also [1], i, p. 171). Only subsequently, when Hegel turns to the construction of matter, are they given any physical significance (see [3], p. 70). So whilst genetically perhaps there is a reference to 'experience', logically we begin with pure category; although the similarity of the wording in the paralleled passages of the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Nature* is remarkable, telling us volumes about the famed problem of the relationship between the two.

I can give here only the merest sketch of the details of Hegel's treatment. As a logical first, the categorial considerations that underlie the concept of matter – that 'immediately identical and existent unity of both' space and time, viewed as 'transition from ideality to reality' ([3], p. 62) – belong to the section of the *Logic* dealing, as already mentioned, with 'being-for-self'. When thus considered, anything, by being entirely 'for itself', must be represented as sheer 'one-ness', *as* One, as what excludes everything else. However, Hegel goes on, this 'one-ness' of being-for-self is not to be conceived as something altogether non-relational, as was the case for the earlier category of pure Being. For now, the relation involved here would have to be the relation of something (to wit: the One), to itself. However, such a relation is not stable; or rather, as Hegel puts it, it is purely 'ideal', and so, in order to get a true relation, you need another One, and then another One, and so on. In other words, according to the explication of the Notion here given, 'the One is . . . the presupposition of the Many' ([2], p. 191), as well as spontaneously transforming itself into a Many; although no doubt from the point of pure reflection, for example the scientific or even common-sense understanding, we must consider the Many as given 'immediately', i.e. simultaneously with the One, as in the philosophy of atomism (ibid.; and cf. loc. cit., pp. 192–3).

Now Hegel characterizes this splitting up of the One into the Many in an interesting way. For this may be regarded as 'the One *repelling itself* from itself' ([1], i, p. 158). It is because the One is as such 'incompatible with itself', as 'pushing itself off from itself' [*als das sich von selbst Abstossende*], that we may 'describe this side of the process of being-for-self through the pictorial expression of *repulsion*', Hegel tells us in the *Logic* ([2], p. 192).

We now need one more step. The many Ones, repelled as they are with respect to any one of them chosen at random, must still *remain* a Many; they must, so to speak, not disappear into infinite logical space. We must thus regard them as for ever remaining in mutual relationship to one another – we might say: the unbounded class must be defined in terms of some definite relational property – and what makes this possible is an aspect of the relation pictorially represented as 'attraction' (see [1], i, p. 166; [2], p. 192). In this way repulsion turns into its opposite – the familiar dialectical process.

We thus see how 'repulsion' and 'attraction' *ab initio* become a purely conceptual aspect of 'matter'. That it is 'matter' which Hegel has in mind – when the 'logical Idea' is 'externalized' as 'nature' – we appreciate when we turn to the *Philosophy of Nature*, where the logical situation is presented in exactly the same way, using quite similar locutions.

> Matter is spatial separation; it offers resistance, and in doing so repels itself: this is repulsion, by which matter posits its reality and fills space.

> But the separated parts which mutually repel each other are only a One, many Ones; each is what the other is. The One repels itself only from itself; this is the suspension [*Aufheben*] of the separation of what is for itself: attraction. These two together, as gravity, constitute the Notion of matter.[3]
>
> ([3], p. 70; [4], p. 46)

This, then, is an instance of 'conceptual explication', as I have labelled it, an extension of Kant's 'metaphysical foundation'. Indeed, as Hegel says:

> Metaphysics [for example metaphysics of nature] is nothing else but the entire range of the universal determinations of thought, as it were, the diamond net into which everything is brought and thereby first made intelligible.
>
> ([3], pp. 18–19; [4], p. 11)

VI

We have found Hegel criticize Kant's procedure as being too closely tied to empirical reflection. But clearly, Hegel has surely likewise availed himself of certain empirical concepts, for example repulsive and attractive forces, except that he has built them more intimately into his analysis of more fundamental aspects, for example the 'being-for-self' of matter, giving an analysis of what it is for matter to be regarded as a plurality of independent particulars, or particles.[4] And this is how he himself sees the logic of the situation. Characterizing his position, *vis-à-vis* Kant's construction, he writes:

> Now it is true that an existence like sensory matter is not an object for logic, any more than space and its determinations. On the other hand, the forces of attraction and repulsion, in so far as they are regarded as forces of sensory matter, lie also at the base of the pure determinations here considered, of the One and the Many and their mutual relationships, which, since these names come most immediately to hand, I have called repulsion and attraction.
>
> ([1], i, p. 171; [5], p. 179)

Hegel's criticism of Kant's excessively empirical approach, however, raises for us a far more fundamental question, which is that of the relation between the notional determinations of the concepts of science (their 'metaphysical foundation'), i.e. between conceptual explication, and the empirical and theoretical results of science; in short, between the physical

and the protophysical components of science. Should we take it that protophysical foundations have any relevance for our assessment of the strength, or *tout simple*, for the strength, of a scientific theory and its concepts? Does its acceptability and credibility depend on the protophysical as much as on the physical component?

This is of course too wide a subject to consider here in all its ramifications, and we can explore it only briefly, keeping in mind the remarks made at the outset, concerning the claimed lack of determination of scientific results by reference to the physical component alone (i.e. the sensory basis, and its systematic inductive integration). And in line with my general thesis, that it is often useful to consider such problems in the light of intelligently articulated results of past philosophies, we will view this matter, too, through the spectacles of Hegel, and also beginning once again with the Kantian background.

For Kant, leaving here out of consideration the regulative aspect, metaphysical foundations primarily generate the 'possibility' of the basic concepts and laws of science like mechanics – a sense of 'possibility' best caught by speaking of 'intelligible possibility' in the popular sense of this expression. As we have seen, for Kant this was not a deductive enterprise. It amounted to no more than taking certain *empirical* concepts, yielded either by primitive feeling (for example what is involved in the sense of touch) or by what was part of current science, and demonstrating its connection with the basic categorial forms of transcendental logic. The increase in credibility, if any, of a science would then be tied up with its connection with the basic forms of thought. However, even so: the looser that connection, the smaller the importance of the result for scientific credibility. Indeed, if the categorial basis, however rigid and permanent, is compatible with an indefinite number of interpretations, it can bestow but little strength on the result. In general, the categorial basis can then be regarded as no more than a necessary condition, as a condition of 'finding one's way around the world' in a rational fashion, though this is no mean function as such. Per contra, if the connection between the metaphysical basis and the empirical result is more articulated and specific, one runs the risk of the only too likely changes in scientific theory overturning the whole enterprise – as, is often said, happened to Kant.

Now as we have seen, Hegel thought that Kant's foundations on the one hand borrowed too much from the common experience as well as from the science of the time, whilst on the other they were too loosely connected with the forms of theoretical science. It would follow that whatever Hegel's achievements in this field, in so far as these yielded concrete interpretations, with a bearing on the contemporary formulations of scientific theory, they would the more likely be overturned by the advance of science, as indeed they frequently have been. Nevertheless, where the emphasis was on the 'intelligibility' of the basic laws of science,

or on arguments about modes of explanation (for instance: whether to employ the concept of Newtonian force in gravitational theory, or to opt for a more analytical Lagrangian approach), the whole procedure would still leave something of lasting import, supplying, for instance, suggestions for novel paradigms.

As may be expected, Hegel himself speaks, as well as performs, with a divided voice. Let us first consider some of his general pronouncements concerning the relation between empirical science and notional determiantion, and then turn to a specific instance. He is of course quite explicit – only a lunatic would be of a contrary opinion – that 'philosophy must be in agreement with our empirical knowledge of nature' ([3], p. 11). Indeed, in the *Logic* he goes so far as to say that agreement between philosophy and science must serve as 'at least an external touchstone for the truth of a philosophy', though he adds that at the same time this requirement applies also in the opposite direction ([2], pp. 9–10).

Moreover, contrary to what might have been expected, in the light of his earlier criticism of Kant previously noted, this agreement is supposed to be brought about in virtue of the fact that 'the origin and formation of the Philosophy of Nature presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics' ([3], p.11). In other words, our philosophizing must converge, at least where possible, on the concepts and theories of science, from which, indeed, it takes its origin. Our task can only be, to deepen these, by integrating them with the more permanent structure of 'the Notion'.

Still, this is not the whole story. The *Logic* soon tells us that philosophy does not leave the 'empirical content' untouched, but rather it must use the laws and classes of science, not just conserving them but 'forming and reforming' them through 'additional categories' ([2], p. 15). In a very Kuhnian passage of the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel expands on this theme:

> All evolutions, in the sciences no less than in world history, originate solely from the fact that Spirit, in order to understand and comprehend itself with a view to possessing itself, has changed its categories, comprehending itself more truly, more deeply, more intimately, and more in unity with itself.
>
> ([3], p. 19; [4], p. 11)

And so finally, although experience may *originate* empirical science, logically speaking it is rather the Notion which is its *foundation* ([3], p. 11).

> The Philosophy of Nature takes up the material which physics has prepared for it empirically, at the point to which physics has brought it, and reconstitutes it, so that experience is not its final warrant and base. Physics must therefore work into the hands of philosophy, in

> order that the latter may translate into the Notion the abstract universal [*sc.* scientific concepts, laws and theories] transmitted to it, by showing how this universal, as an intrinsically necessary whole, proceeds from the Notion.
>
> ([3], p. 18; [4], p. 10)

Our example of the construction of matter and its forces has shown us already how Hegel envisages the details of this process. It is in this presuppositional sense that Hegel occasionally speaks in a more extreme voice, as when he says that nature, though at first sight something perpetually external to spirit, yet may be 'overcome by' spirit; that the eternal Idea dwells within nature, and that spirit, working from within, brings about the suspension of this externality (cf. [6], pp. 21–3, where 'spirit' of course involves the whole gamut, not just of individual but also of collective consciousness).

But I think that these are passages expressing no more than an ideal and an intellectual hope. Indeed, if realized, it would be contrary to his most basic assumptions, for example that the various levels and spheres of reality (of the Notion), though suspended (*aufgehoben*) at each stage of the dialectical transmutations, yet do not thereby altogether lose their categorial character. If nature, for instance, ceased to be 'externality' it would no longer stand in opposition to spirit, and the dialectical 'drive', so to speak, would be lost.

At any rate, in his more sober moments, Hegel appreciates the power of what he calls the 'indifferent contingency and indeterminable irregularity' of nature, and he then speaks of

> the impotence of Nature, that it preserves the determinations of the Notion only abstractly, and leaves their detailed specification to external determination.
>
> ([3], p. 37; [4], pp. 22–3)

Indeed, the 'necessity of the edifices generated by the Notion' on the one hand, and the 'immediacy' and 'contingency' of Nature on the other, is here called the veritable 'contradiction of the Idea' (ibid.).

This means above all that we should not construe the relation between notional determination (what I have called conceptual explication) and that for which it forms the 'foundation' as in any way deductive. Unlike the older 'rationalist' enterprise of an Aristotle or a Descartes – at least, this was the ideal – the 'necessity due to the Notion' ([3], p. 45) does not develop its necessity in deductive fashion 'downwards'. At most, the scientific edifice will exhibit 'traces of the determination by the Notion' ([3], p. 37). And so, in a most important passage of the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel tells us that

> This impotence of Nature sets limits to philosophy and it is quite improper to expect the Notion to comprehend – or as it is said, to construct or deduce – these contingent products of nature.
>
> (ibid.; [4], p. 23)

Again, after having sketched some plausible reasons for the form of Kepler's laws of planetary motion, he writes:

> Philosophy has to start from the Notion, and even if it does not assert much, we must be content with this. The Philosophy of Nature is in error when it wants to account for every phenomenon; this is what happens in the finite sciences, which try to trace everything back to general conceptions, the hypotheses. In these sciences, the sole verification of the hypothesis lies in the empirical element and consequently everything has to be explained. But what is known through the Notion is clear by itself and stands firm; and philosophy need not feel any embarrassment about this, even if not all the phenomena are yet explained.
>
> ([3], p. 124; [4], p. 82)

VII

We seen then that on the whole Hegel envisages the relation between the sciences and the metaphysics of science quite non-deductively. It is much more like the Kantian programme of demonstrating 'intelligible possibilities' than Hegel's supposed audacity (as popular legend has it) of wanting to anticipate scientific results by *a priori* deductions from his Logic. However, it is a matter of more or less. The more 'contingent' and 'concretely individual' the detail, the less notional considerations will have relevance to the result. On the other hand, where scientists formulate conceptual approaches, determine the language of some given branch of science, lay down base-lines, we may expect conceptual explication to predominate – witness the traditional efforts in this direction concerning the basic laws of motion of Newtonian science. Thus we should expect Hegel's notional determinations to be directed primarily at those levels of science that he regards as basic. There are presentations in modern times of the theory of Special Relativity which attempt to summarize its basic principles in the slogan 'absolute motion is meaningless'; and the charm of this is often thought to consist in the fact that an empirical matter has been determined by reference to something connected with the concepts of the science in question alone. Now just such an extreme border-line case we find in Hegel. I call it that because Hegel here comes

as close as may be to a deductive development, a formulation of an actual 'empirical' law derived entirely from notional considerations.

The law in question is the law of free-fall, discovered originally, as Hegel specially notes in the *Jena Logic*, by Galileo as an empirical law (see [7], p. 220). In Hegel's formulation, the law says that the space, s, covered by the freely falling body is proportional to the square of the time t; symbolically, $s = ct^2$. Now Hegel is rather emphatic in his insistence on the empirical origin of this law; moreover, for him the law is basic, non-derivable from higher-level scientific hypotheses. Actually, there are some rather wider reasons for this; as usual in Hegel, nothing can ever be fully understood without consulting other parts of his system where the corresponding categorial concepts are being discussed.

Thus, in the present instance, it is the concept of law, or lawlikeness, itself that we have to refer to in order to keep track of Hegel's intentions. As already noted, this concept is not examined, as would be the case with a modern text on the philosophy of science, in relation to concerns connected with induction. (Induction, though briefly discussed in the *Logic*, occurs in a totally different context.) Rather, 'law' makes its appearance at a certain stage of the sphere of 'essence', more particularly, in Hegel's elucidation of the notion of 'phenomenon' (*Erscheinung*).

As one might expect, Hegel as usual distinguishes opposing sides of this notion. On one side we have the merely existing multitude of sensory data, constantly changing, arising and disappearing; on the other, there is what remains unchanging and subsisting; this is 'the law of the phenomenon' ([1], ii, p. 126). Now Hegel argues – I can only give the merest sketch here – that the members of each of these sides are at first merely external to one another, and this builds up the usual tensions within these paired oppositions. But next: if each pair of oppositions can eventually be overcome or mediated (i.e. if we give an analysis that shows it thus mediated), then (argues Hegel, though the point is difficult to follow) the two – the sensory existential and the lawlike hypothetical – will come together and indeed be seen as essentially one:

> That which previously was law, is hence no longer merely one side of the whole whose other side was phenomenon as such, but it is itself the whole.
>
> (loc. cit., p. 131)

This amounts to the contention that one must not contrast empirical reality with its lawlike description, for on closer inspection they collapse into one, leading to what Hegel calls the 'dissolution of the phenomenon' (loc. cit., p. 134), and to the next stage, where new oppositions will be articulated, such as those of whole-and-parts, force and its manifestations

(to which I have already briefly alluded) the inner–outer relation, and so on.

For us, the essential point is that lawlikenes is again certified as a stage in the dialectical flux of the categories, and it should be noted that one interesting result of the preceding analysis is that the sharp distinction between a purely theoretical network and a quite separate inarticulate phenomenal reality is here overcome. In Hegel's words, 'the kingdom of laws' does not just contain the 'simple, changeless but varied content of the existent world', but it also 'contains the moment' of the 'essenceless [immediately given] manifoldness (loc. cit., p. 131) – very much like the corresponding rejection of the theory–observation distinction of some recent 'realists'.

So much for the background and intentions of Hegel's discussion of law. An important stage in the whole development was, however, the necessary mediation of the tension (due to their apparent 'externality') between the two sides of the law. Now in any normal empirical law, says Hegel, the connection between the two sides is only *posited*, warranted only by experiment and observation with which it relates only inductively, or hypothetically. As such, the connection still requires proof.

Interestingly, already in the *Science of Logic*, where Hegel discusses the 'law of the phenomenon' in general, the whole argument is illustrated by reference to the law of free-fall. Here, likewise (at least at first sight, Hegel means), the spatial and temporal variables are said to be 'indifferent' to one another; no conceptual connection exists between them:

> It is not contained in the motion of the space traversed during fall, that it should correspond to the square of the time.
>
> ([1], ii, p. 129)

In the law it is only stated *formally* that if one side is posited, the other side is posited likewise (in the German text there is here a nice suggestive association between *gesetzt* [posited] and *Gesetz* [law]).

Now it might be objected that the two sides of the law can be *shown* to be connected non-empirically through theoretical derivation, for example using Newtonian theory. (I shall here ignore Feyerabend's celebrated contention that this cannot be done.) This would not, however, meet Hegel's intentions. First of all, such a derivation would only yield logical necessity, and would have to assume premises whose sides are just as 'externally' related as those of the derivative law, for instance the law of gravitation. Moreover, in the case of Galileo's law, Hegel actually rejects the Newtonian derivation altogether, for a variety of reasons too complex to enter upon here in any detail. Such a derivation first of all would employ the otiose concepts of a set of independent forces, inertial and

accelerative. Furthermore, Hegel also thinks that nothing but an 'analytical' account, involving the employment of differential calculus with a properly defined notion of 'limit' (such as is absent from Newton's presentation, but present in Lagrange), will be satisfactory. But the Lagrangian formulation, Hegel notes – the argument occurs in an extended footnote in the *Philosophy of Nature* ([3], p. 87n.), showing once again that it is quite impossible to dissociate the account of 'nature' from that of the 'Logic' – has, moreover, the advantage of giving an exposition in which Galileo's law is left as the empirical basis and starting point. It avoids what I earlier referred to as 'substantive' theory-types, with their theoretical conceptions of underlying atoms, waves and forces, and entirely remains on the phenomenal surface, i.e. it uses a 'phenomenological' theory-type, of which later classical thermodynamics is another prominent example.

The upshot of all this is that Galileo's law is intrinsically empirical, the sides of the law remaining apart *eo ipso*, their stipulated connection opaque to the intellect.

But now: we have seen that it is one of Hegel's contentions that a passage from the 'law of the phenomenon' to the next sphere of the *Logic* is only possible if the separatedness of the sides of the law is overcome and mediated conceptually, albeit – since we have here an intrinsically empirical law – only by means of a 'determination of the Notion'. In the *Logic* Hegel talks of course as though this could always be supplied. In reality, however, we have so far no more than a statement of principle that needs at least some exemplification. The interest of the example of free-fall lies in the fact that Hegel seems to have taken it as one of the rare cases where notional determination can at least putatively effect the necessary transition. (It is not surprising, therefore, that this is the example used in the *Science of Logic*.) What Hegel hopes to show is that the two sides of the equation $s = ct^2$ should mutually imply and presuppose each other. The point is that the notional account will have to connect space and time in such a way that to the s there *must* correspond, or that at least it can be seen as intelligibly plausible that there should correspond, the square of the time. Moreover, this must be effected so as to point up the dialectical nature of the relation; in the words of the *Science of Logic*: the account must show that

> each of them [*sc.* each side of the equation of law] contains the other within it, and at the same time, as a self-subsistent side, repels this its otherness from itself, [so that] the identity of the law is therefore now also a posited and real identity.
>
> ([1], ii, p. 131; [5], p. 506)

VIII

There are thus two problems. (I) Space and time must be shown mutually to involve one another in dialectical tension. (2) It is the *square* of the time that must balance the spatial displacement. As I have indicated, Hegel does not stand alone in wanting to provide conceptual foundations for the laws, and even the form of the laws, of science – and we must always remember that Hegel held Galileo's law to be basic. Descartes, Euler, Kant, Whewell, Eddington are members of a long list of names associated with such a task. Besides, it is ironical to reflect that Galileo himself in the *Discourses* first attempts a rational or conceptual approach to the law (connected with the formula $s = \frac{1}{2} gt^2$) that the acceleration of free-fall *must* be the same for all bodies, however bulky. Again, as Mach pointed out, if in the law of free-fall you change the vista, by multiplying each side by a force term, i.e. F, where $F = mg$, you get the expression $mgs = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$, so that Galileo's law is just a special case of conservation of mechanical energy which in turn has frequently been represented as a special tightening of the general rule *causa aequat effectum.*

More audacious was Hegel's attempt to provide a rationale for the particular form of Galileo's law, or at least for the fact that the displacement is here related to the square of the time, although once again it would be a mistake to imagine him wanting to give a strictly deductive account, leading to the actual formula; it is always assumed that the latter has been discovered, and can only be discovered empirically.

Let us consider the two problems in turn. First, it has to be shown that space needs time, and time space, each turning dialectically into its other, whilst never logically at rest apart. Now space is as such undifferentiated self-externality [*Aussersichsein*], so in order to *determine* this aspect of the Notion you need to introduce differentiations, the first of which is the point in such a space. If this is to be regarded as a negation of something *spatial*, it must itself be regarded as something determinate, namely, as being the component of a line. In accordance with the usual dialectical procedure, we must now reach also the negation of the negation, through which indeterminate space becomes first realized, and this means that the line must pass over into the plane, through which – as something enclosing – an *individual* spatial whole is first reached. This procedure can be regarded as modelled on the *picture*, as Hegel notes, that a moving point produces a line, a moving line a surface etc., except that in the dialectical argument these 'motions' are conceptual. Besides, he adds, one could also invert the account, by beginning with space as something positive, with the surface its first negation, the line as the negation of this negation, etc. 'The necessity of the transition would still be the same' ([3], p. 49).

What has preceded has only been mentioned as an exemplification of Hegel's thinking and of his logical dynamic; to show that we cannot stop at any stage, but need to advance to the next; in the present instance this turns out to be time. Space is altogether undifferentiated. Even though we now picture it as surface-enclosed, there is no fixed position where this can take place: 'the world is nowhere nailed up with boards' ([3], p. 46). How are we going to inject into this the aspects of singularity, specificity, plurality, no longer the total 'indifference' of space?

With twentieth-century views in mind, we might say that in order to give meaning to the notion of space we have to introduce a physical reference system, which since it must be regarded as being either in motion or at rest *vis-à-vis* some other system, requires reference to time, with the latter as the prior aspect. Hegel will say: any point in this originally undifferentiated space will have 'its actuality' only in time, where time is regarded as the negation of space, eternal rest being contrasted with perpetual motion, the principle of finitude with that of infinity. And thus, in a pregnant phrase:

> In pictorial representation [*sc.* common or scientific understanding], space and time are taken to be quite separate: we have space and *also* time; this 'also' is what philosophy fights against.
>
> ([3], p. 53)

By now of course, physical science has reached just such a position.

I will pass by Hegel's arguments purporting to show that time in turn, in the need to represent itself as something with discrete units, externalizes itself, and becomes transmuted into space. (Again the need for *spatial* representation of temporal intervals will be only too familiar to the scientist.)

This, then, is Hegel's answer to the first of our problems: to demonstrate the mutual implication of space and time from considerations of the Notion. But what of our second problem, the proportionality of displacement to the square of the time? Of course, from one point of view, Hegel's attempt must be doomed to failure, since whatever general considerations he may advance, it is not at all clear why these should converge on a *specific law* of motion, even though motion *in general* may have been elucidated as the visible nexus between space and time, as per Hegel's subsequent account, following upon space and time (here omitted). The only reason I can think of is that since Galileo's law is held by Hegel to be a primary basis of mechanics (contrasted with Newtonian mechanics, where, for instance, the 'law of inertia' is such a primary law, though by Hegel rejected as insignificant (see [3], p. 78)), he must have reasoned that equally basic considerations ought to manifest themelves in its form. The inability of the Notion to 'explain everything', as we

have found Hegel admit previously, is brought home here in a disastrous way.

How, then, does Hegel meet his own request that 'the way be shown in which Galileo's law . . . connects with the determination of the Notion' ([3], p. 88)? Unfortunately, the account in the *Encyclopaedia* is too abbreviated to give much sense, although even the much more extended story of the *Jena Logic* does not offer the reader much help (cf. [3], p. 88; [7], pp. 218–26). In any case, limitations of space here forbid more than the merest sketch. The main point may be described by saying that in motion time as such is totally indeterminate, a mere 'one' or 'unit' *vis-à-vis* space, and thus needs representation as a space. A moving point describes a *space* when moving in *time*. So motion, whilst on one side represented as a line, on the other has to be represented as a surface-space (remember the previous account of the evolution of point into line and line into space!). To the magnitude of the time, as Hegel puts it in the *Philosophy of Nature*, is here opposed the asunderness [*Aussereinandersein*] of space. The simplest determination of such a surface is that of the square. Why the square? Again Hegel has some special reasons for this, connecting with his view that the correct representation of such a quantity as uniform acceleration requires the relation of powers (see [1], pp. 331 ff.; [3], p. 88), and in the *Logic*, moreover, the highest and most complete determination of the 'quantum' is said to be the equality of number and unity, which is the raising to a higher power, the most elementary case of this being 'the square' (see [2], pp. 203–4).

Whilst as an account with justificative impact this wild grasping around in all directions, searching for significant structural pointers, may strike the philosopher as naive, it does actually describe something of the psychological pecularities in which scientists and mathematicians find themselves when exploring new ventures that are eventually to lead to significant discoveries. At any rate, we thus get the result that in the motion of free-fall (and Hegel stresses the literal significance of the 'freedom' this implies) the linearity of the displacement variable must be balanced by a quantity spatially represented as a square.

Here, an analogy may help, for it is worth remembering that one can represent the equation $s = ct^2$ by means of a spatial diagram, as was done by Galileo himself in the *Discourses*. In this diagram, the spatial ordinates are t and vt, where v is the variable velocity, proportional to the time t. In such a diagram, s is then represented by a triangular *area* (the product of t and $v/2$ where $v = gt$), which is half the square gt^2!

'This is the proof of the law of free-fall as derived from the notion of the thing' ([3], p. 88), Hegel tells us. Clearly this is not a proof, but a search for intelligibility, by having recourse to a vast variety of recondite considerations attached only loosely to the dialectic of space and time. Hegel's 'system' is never truly systematic. But it has seemed to me

important to subject Hegel to this relatively detailed analysis, to study a very narrow and relatively self-contained region of a vast domain, a region where things are relatively static and well defined in the corresponding branch of science, in the hope that such special examples may throw more light on Hegel's overall intentions than general accounts of the kind that have been usual from the time of Hegel up to the present.

IX

I previously sought to distinguish three components of scientific appraisal. The Kant–Hegel sequence provides us with a special border-line example, and in the case of Hegel, with an example in extreme form, of what I have called 'conceptual explication'. The Hegelian example is especially useful in bringing us face to face with the problem of the relation between physical and protophysical, between what Hegel calls the merely representational or ideal, and the notional components.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the Kant–Hegel approach is more conservative than that of the modern school of paradigm-dominated analysis of science. Even in the case of Hegel, notional determination ties only some of the more general and basic concepts of the various sciences to the underlying notional framework, and any criticism of science – otherwise treated as a going concern – does not usually involve an attempted transformation of the governing concepts of that science. Hegel does not usually consider competing theories, one of which might be backed as exemplifying special support from the notional background, although we have the beginning of an example perhaps in the Newton versus Lagrange dispute. At any rate, Hegel was not, and did not wish to pose as, a creative scientist. He is concerned with foundations, with charting the extent to which these touch on general paradigms; he does not normally wish to formulate new paradigms. Thus, in dynamics his notional determination is intended heavily to underwrite the superiority of the French analytic approaches as compared with the synthetic method of the British school. He opts for a reductionist account of force (and atom), and in general opposes substantive theory-types, as met with for instance in the optical theory of his contemporaries. In this last case, he again attempts sketches of notional versions of optical laws and phenomena, though in this case not usually leading to any quantitative formulations, and they should certainly again not be regarded as alternative scientific theories but as suggestions for the formulation of such alternatives, eschewing reference to physical ethers or particles, and more of the kind subsequently exemplified in the mathematical formulations of Jean Fresnel (see my account of Hegel's optics in [12]).

Generalizing from these examples, we may thus estimate the relevance

and 'weight' of the notional component, and of the protophysical components in general. We began by noting the underdetermined status of theories, relative to the empirical data invoked on their behalf. It is clear that the less determined a theory is by such data, the greater the weight of the protophysical component, although by leaving the observational level relatively intact, Kant and Hegel do not yet seem to have realized the problem of the 'inductive weight' of the protophysical component as such. They are more concerned with 'intelligibility' or 'possibility', rather than 'probability'; for them these dwell in independent domains. The sharpness of the distinction depends in the end on our formulation of criteria for 'truth' in science. But contemporary theory of science, to mention just one example, still finds itself beset by the problem of how to construe 'lawlikeness', often felt to be a vital link in any rational reconstruction of inductive procedures. To the extent to which this problem reaches down into the protophysical domain, the division between our two main components is only one of convenience. Certainly, the relevance of the protophysical component should not be underestimated, but it needs to be articulated through an awareness of its historical roots, so that we can take note of all the various intellectual nuances that are part of it. Which is why I think these explorations into Kant and Hegel may have some value, for in the broad stream of the history of thought on 'foundations' they represent an important shift in direction.

Underdetermination, from the start, produced the demand for special 'starting points', premises, the traditional response being that such premises of science should exhibit a special kind of necessity. This was the programme of 'rational foundations', from Aristotle, Descartes and Locke all the way to some twentieth-century writers. Kant and Hegel produce the first far-reaching transformation of this programme, although they still talk frequently in the old rationalist language, of wanting to exhibit the necessity or apodeictic certainty of the basic hypotheses of science. In this paper we have, however, seen that their method reduces the old ideal to an epistemologically more modest requirement, which is that the concepts and hypotheses of a science should satisfy some set of protophysical criteria, for example conservation, simplicity, continuity, economy, symmetry; and that scientific concepts should be tied to the basic forms of the logic of our language. What remains here as the most important element of the older rationalism is the demand for 'intelligibility': witness the application of this notion to certain controversies about the foundations of quantum mechanics in our own day. Whether 'intelligibility' can rightly be joined with 'knowledge' (in the sense of the German *Wissen*), to yield a justifiable concept of what Kant called *Erkenntnis*, must here be left an open question.

Notes

1 I have shown elsewhere how these components can be used to resolve certain paradoxical situations in the history of science, for instance approaches to gravitational theory ([10], pp. 204–30).

2 In the *Science of Logic* this takes up as much as twenty-five pages, exceeded only by the discussion of the foundations of the differential calculus.

3 Note that 'gravity' [*die Schwere*] is for Hegel a resultant of attraction and repulsion, and thus belongs essentially to matter, contrary to the Newtonian view. Indeed, according to him, gravity must be sharply distinguished from gravitational attraction, which in any case Hegel does not wish to regard as an independently existing force, but as reducible to 'empirical' determinations, derivable for instance from the (by him regarded as) more basic Keplerian laws of planetary motion.

4 To complete our account, it would be necesary also to refer to Hegel's explication of the concept of force in general, which, curiously, occurs not in the section on Being but on Essence, and as a way of construing the relational nature of phenomena by way of the 'essential relation' of 'force and its manifestations'. The treatment of each of the sections dealing with force is of course meant to illuminate the other, although Hegel treats them apart, presumably because repulsion–attraction results only in the bare concept of continuous extended matter in general, whilst the later section on 'force' deals more broadly with dynamic action between separated parcels of matter. In the latter section, Hegel ends by construing force as the 'totality of its manifestation, conceived as law' ([2], p. 272), thereby once again wanting to remove the suggestion of force being some pseudo-reified substance, such as the electric and thermic and magnetic 'imponderables' of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (cf. [1], ii, p. 145).

In the *Phenomenology of Mind*, the section dealing with 'Force and Understanding' ([15], pp. 105–14), the close connection between force in general, force as repulsion–attraction, involved in the notion of 'being-for-self', and the 'law of the phenomenon' is much more explicit. Force is here introduced as an important model through which to picture the way in which the understanding may come to grasp the nature of the phenomenal 'thing', viewed as a 'one' (for example substance) of 'many' (attributes). In this analysis the 'thing' on one side appears as again a unity of 'being-for-self', a unity that at once converts into its 'opposite' by 'unfolding' into a plurality of manifest qualities. Now 'force' is precisely the picture for Hegel through which he wants to represent that which, in 'being-for-itself', necessarily manifests itself as 'outside-itself', as repelling or attracting. Compare with this the modern notion of the 'field of force', which for its realization requires a test-particle, in order to manifest itself, the test-particle, in reacting against the original force becoming a new centre of force. Now just as in the modern example, in Hegel's account the original force-centre cannot manifest itself, i.e. 'solicit' an other, without the 'other' ([15], pp. 107–9). This duplication thus parallels that of the 'one' and the 'many' of 'being-for-self' and of 'matter' in the later writings; to 'understand' this duplication, we must envisage it under the 'moments' of repulsive-and-attractive force.

For the sake of what follows, it should also be noted that in the *Phenomenology* this dialectical 'play of forces' transmutes itself into the 'law of force', a 'lawlikeness' which is then used to explicate the 'thing' (qua 'phenomenon') as 'law of the phenomenon'. This is of course in turn subject to the usual dialectical tensions,

an account of which (following Hegel's later versions, all occurring under separate headings) we give below.

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A re-interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of nature

George R. Lucas

Hegel's treatment of the natural sciences is widely regarded as an arcane and derivative interpretation of Schelling's speculative *Naturphilosophie*. Consequently, Hegel's criticisms of the conventional metaphysical foundations of Newtonian science in the *Logic* and *Philosophy of Nature* are perceived as holding little importance for his larger 'system'. With few exceptions, this material is virtually ignored in the conventional treatments of Hegel's philosophy.[1]

I offer an interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of nature which suggests its close affinity with a unique variation of teleological explanation – termed 'organic mechanism' – first outlined by Alfred North Whitehead in his Lowell Lectures of 1925 in order to account for those relativistic and quantum phenomena which comprised the central problem of modern physics.[2] Like Whitehead, Hegel was concerned to overcome the arbitrary 'bifurcation' of nature implicit in Cartesian and Kantian dualism, was similarly persuaded of the serious inadequacies in determinism and what Whitehead termed 'materialistic mechanism'[3] for this purpose, and likewise rejected the alternative of vitalism. My interpretation suggests a sound basis for the comparisons frequently drawn between the larger speculative systems of both philosophers,[4] and presents an intelligible reading of a notoriously obscure region of Hegel's philosophy.

I

In the course of his survey of the history of modern science and his description of the conceptual dilemmas facing physicists in the early twentieth century, Whitehead formulated a tentative metaphysical synthesis in response to those dilemmas, which he labelled with the unfortunate and somewhat misleading oxymoron 'organic mechanism'. While

elements of this first metaphysical synthesis in *Science and the Modern World* do survive in his highly technical (and similarly-titled) 'philosophy of organism' in *Process and Reality*, 'organic mechanism' must, in general, be sharply distinguished from that later, more esoteric doctrine.[5]

The behaviour of such entities as concern modern physics, Whitehead asserted, can no longer be adequately accounted for in terms of the older explanatory model of Newtonian–Laplacian mechanism, with its rigidly deterministic interpretation of causality and its notion of inert substance or matter at a 'simple location'. Instead, the rudimentary features of the physical world once subsumed under the category of 'inert, self-subsistent matter' are, in the revised view of the world which relativity and quantum theory present, more appropriately described using the category of 'organisms'. Atomic and sub-atomic particles, for example, may be conceptualized as 'organisms' in a manner analogous to biological organisms: all are finite centres of self-directed, purposive activity characterized primarily by perpetual, but organized, flux or becoming. Finally, this early doctrine suggests that the patterns of these rudimentary entities (i.e. their physical behaviour) may be altered whenever they are subordinate constituents of situations of greater complexity:

> Science is taking on a new aspect which is neither purely physical nor purely biological. It is becoming the study of organisms. Biology is the study of the larger organisms; whereas physics is the study of smaller organisms . . . The organisms of biology include as ingredients the smaller organisms of physics . . . In this theory, the molecules may blindly run in accordance with the general laws [of physics], but the molecules differ in their intrinsic characters according to the general organic plans of the situations in which they find themselves . . . it remains an immediate deduction that an individual entity, whose own life-history is a part within the life-history of some larger, deeper, more complete pattern, is liable to have aspects of that larger pattern dominating its own being, and to experience modifications of that larger pattern reflected in itself as modifications of its own being. This is the theory of organic mechanism.[6]

There is more than a hint of vitalism in this formulation, with its analogical use and extension of the term 'organism' as a metaphysical category. Notwithstanding, Whitehead moved to reject what he understood as the 'compromise of vitalism' (along with 'materialistic mechanism'), the introduction of an arbitrary and radical 'bifurcation' or dualism in nature between the organic and in-organic realm.[7] This agenda may account for the choice of the phrase 'organic mechanism', which does not recur in Whitehead's later writing.[8]

II

In his two-volume *Science of Logic* (1812/1816), Hegel likewise analyses competing accounts of entities (objects) and their states of affairs: mechanism, 'chemism' and teleology.[9]

Mechanism normally applies to entities which are 'complete and self-subsistent'. One must bear in mind, however, that Hegel's use of the phrase 'complete and self-subsistent' in this context is pejorative and sarcastic. Hegel was saddled with a Newtonian concept of corpuscular matter – the same concept which Whitehead later would dismiss as 'vacuous actuality'.[10] Hegel, while obviously hostile to this static, inert interpretation of 'matter', would have been hard-pressed in the early nineteenth century to reject outright so obvious a concept. His recourse is to ridicule 'matter' as having no real significance: i.e. as 'self-subsistent', unresponsive to and unaltered in any real way by its environment.

Accordingly, such relationships and interactions which entities susceptible to mechanistic explanation entertain are wholly external and accidental to the nature of the entities themselves.

> [T]he character of *mechanism* is that whatever relation obtains between the things combined, this relation is one *extraneous* to them that does not concern their nature at all.[11]

It is not entirely clear what Hegel takes as examples of such entities and their mechanical relations. He seems to hold that not even tools or parts of machines are capable of exhaustive explanation by mechanism alone, since these involve an implied purpose in their design and use. One surmises from his discussions, however, that he envisions the normal physical causal interactions among the corpuscular matter of the physics of his day – inert stones, colliding billiard balls and similar objects which served as the examples of 'matter' in classical Newtonian mechanics.

The essential flaw of mechanism, according to Hegel, is that complete or comprehensive explanation is never possible. Any given state or condition of a specific entity or aggregate of entities cannot be explained solely by reference to that entity or aggregate alone, but must instead assign a reason or cause of every state or phase to other entities. Since each entity or event requires reference to another entity or event to explain its own existence, complete, coherent descriptions of finite entities, systems or processes are never possible. For Hegel, this demonstrates the conceptual incoherence of mechanism and determinism.[12]

Hegel's interpretation of the weakness in the explanatory power of mechanism seems to be its failure to admit of real reciprocal relatedness, including internal relations among entities which are to some degree constitutive of the entities themselves.[13] By contrast, 'chemism' (an

unusual term in its own right) is defined in terms of the relations or affinities *among* entities, in which the behaviour of the individuals is governed by their participation in an organized system.[14]

Hegel sets the stage for this novel (and generally misunderstood) discussion of 'chemism' in a prior discussion of mechanical entities which enter into a larger relationship based upon 'law'. He means, for example, point-masses in a uniform force field (such as the planets of the solar system in the sun's gravitational field), all alike subject to Newton's Second Law of Motion. To a very limited degree, such uniform relationships of order can be interpreted as constitutive of the entities thus related, in the sense of establishing a uniform principle of organization governing the processes of change and activity in which these entities are involved. These associations of entities, however, entail a pattern or structure (the *Begriff*, Concept or Notion) which is still 'external' to the objects themselves.[15]

From the standpoint of a more modern atomic theory of chemical interactions, of course, it would appear that a simple chemical reaction likewise can be explained in terms of atomic elements undergoing differing molecular configurations which are only marginally 'constitutive' of the elements themselves. Thus a chemical process, in contemporary perspective, appears indistinguishable from what Hegel described as a mechanical process exhibiting the 'self-determining unity of law'.

The historical importance of Hegel's own interest in 'chemism' as a category of relatedness *distinct* from mechanism, however, is related to a novel feature of early nineteenth-century chemistry: the discovery of, and the apparent inability of classical mechanistic explanation to account for, oxidation-reduction reactions:

> Certain chemical phenomena have led chemistry to apply the determination of *teleology* in explaining them. An example is the fact that an oxide is reduced in the chemical process to a lower degree of oxidation than that at which it can combine with the acid acting on it, while a part of it is more strongly oxidized. There is here a rudimentary self-determination of the *Begriff* from its own resources in its realization, which is thus not determined solely by conditions which are already *outwardly* to hand.[16]

Lacking an adequate atomic theory, it appeared as if otherwise inert, self-subsistent inorganic entities, during such reactions, could effect changes in their own individual, internal constitutions in order to co-operate or participate in some sort of larger, external relationship.

'Chemism' was therefore significant for Hegel as an intermediary between mechanistic and teleological explanation in the natural sciences. Chemical entities, so it seemed, were not entirely self-subsistent after all.

Rather, the inert properties of classical matter appeared, on occasion, subordinate to the structure or pattern of an overarching chemical process. This, in turn, seemed to lend support to Hegel's wider contention that the relationships in which entities participate must be viewed to some extent as constitutive of the entities themselves.

In the chemical and mechanical systems which Hegel describes, the pattern or principle of organization exhibited is finally external to, rather than immanent in, the mechanical–chemical entity or system. By contrast, the only necessity governing a teleological system is the internal 'necessity' of behaving according to the system's own, immanent, intelligible, characteristic structure.[17] Hegel here identifies *his* theory of teleological explanation with Aristotle's, even as he distinguishes their common model of entelechy or 'inner design' from the traditional Enlightenment concept of 'design', in which purposive organization was wholly *external* to, rather than immanent in organic entities.[18] Finally, in the same section of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel suggests that the true significance of teleological explanations in nature, encompassing and superseding both mechanism and chemism, is that any such explanation 'cancels the antithesis between [something] objective which would be and [remain] objective only, and [something] subjective which in like manner would be and [remain] subjective only'.[19]

Thus, for Hegel, as for Whitehead, teleology is the cornerstone of what Whitehead later called the 'Reformed Subjectivist Principle'. That is, for both philosophers, the inherently purposive and creative character of all reality is precisely that which overcomes the false subject–object dichotomy and its consequent bifurcation of nature, by demonstrating that the principle of structure and creative development which the mind observes in the world is in fact the principle of intelligible order characteristic of the world-in-itself.[20]

In mechanism and chemism, Hegel is arguing that entities can be seen to exhibit more and more self-determining, or system-determining, behaviour. From the bare externality of mechanism, through the nascent spontaneity of chemical systems, entities or systems of entities more nearly approach purposive, self-directed behaviour. Hegel rejects, however, the suggestion (current in early nineteenth-century philosophy of science) that the world is somehow divided into spheres of influence, where either efficient or final causation obtains. Thus he rejects, as Whitehead later does, the alternative of a pure vitalism. Hegel's novel argument is rather that the essentials of efficient causation in the natural sciences – of mechanism and chemism – are not so much refuted as *preserved* within the broader context of teleological explanation. Or, as he argues, 'the end-relation in general has proved itself to be in and for itself the *truth of mechanism*'.[21]

Teleological explanations apply to those entities in which mechanical

and chemical aspects finally are subordinate (as were Whitehead's 'blindly running molecules') to an overarching structure or pattern of behaviour. Teleological explanations thus do *not* describe simply located vacuous actualities, but entities or systems which are self-moderating and self-maintaining. Any such entity or system is, according to Hegel, properly classified as an 'organism'.[22]

Living biological organisms are but one special case of the generalized metaphysical category of 'organism' which Hegel here proposes. Organisms are distinguished by the immanence (or 'innerness') of their *Begriff* or pattern of organization – a somewhat obscure way of indicating that organisms are internally governed, self-determining entities. In particular, as with Whitehead, mechanistic and deterministic models do not account for the behaviour of organisms. Rather, as Prof. George Kline has observed, organisms are characterized for Hegel (in a manner very similar to Whitehead) by process, immanent purposiveness, subjectivity and feeling, self-determination, 'conditioned' or partial self-creation, and freedom.[23] This metaphysical category of organism is defined by Hegel so as to apply in the realm of nature to describe biological entities (including human beings), as well as in the realm of culture or 'spirit' to characterize political and cultural entities, in close analogy with Whitehead's similar extrapolation of the category of organism in *Science and the Modern World*.[24]

In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel offers extensive and often highly technical treatments of problems in physics, chemistry and biology under the headings of Mechanics, Physics and 'Organic Physics' [*Organische Physik*], paralleling his treatment of mechanism, chemism and teleology, respectively, in the *Logic*. These discussions reveal a remarkably thorough and lively interest in and acquaintance with the state of the natural sciences in his day, contrasting rather sharply with the prevailing view that Hegel (like his contemporaries in the German idealist and Romantic movements) knew little and cared less about the natural sciences. It will suffice for present purposes, however, to pass over much of this fascinating mixture of idiosyncrasies and strikingly modern insights,[25] in order to focus on Hegel's treatment of 'Organic Physics'.

This final section, whose awkward title seems as inappropriate to its subject matter as Whitehead's 'organic mechanism' does to his, discusses those 'organisms' of concern to the biological sciences. Once again, an organism is a unifying activity. That is, an organism is a self-generating, self-maintaining process which attempts to synthesize disparate elements from its environment into a concrete, harmonious unity.

> [The organism is a] *concrete* unity with self, self-produced into unity from the particularizing of the different corporealities, a unity which is the activity of negating this its one-sided form of reference-to-self,

> of sundering and particularizing itself into the moments of the *Begriff* and equally of bringing them back into that unity . . . the infinite process which spontaneously kindles and sustains itself.[26]

From the standpoint of the *Logic*, we have seen that this organic process involves the co-ordination and subordination of mechanical and chemical processes within the context of the self-maintenance and perpetual synthesis of the organic entity. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel proceeds to demonstrate how this model serves to explain the distinct functions of plant and animal organisms.

Plants are indeed self-maintaining organisms, but only rudimentarily so.[27] The distinct parts of the plant exist in only a loosely interdependent relationship. Inverted in the soil, the plant's roots will begin to sprout leaves, and the leaves, roots. Severed from the plant, a leaf and stem are capable of sprouting roots and eventually growing into a complete plant. A plant, as Whitehead would later suggest, appears more as a democracy of organisms than as a hierarchically ordered organic system.[28]

Such 'looseness' of organization or externality is more completely overcome in what Hegel called the 'veritable organism' – the animal – in which 'the outer formation accords with the [inner] *Begriff*, so that the parts are essentially members and subjectively exists as the One which pervades the whole'.[29] Hegel suggests that the animal organism is the 'microcosm, the centre of Nature which has achieved an existence for itself in which the whole of inorganic Nature is recapitulated and idealized'.[30]

In contrast to plants, the animal represents a whole which cannot be fully represented by any of its constituent members in isolation. Each of those constituent parts – body members, organs and so forth – may function as a means for the realization of ends serving other parts of the organism or the whole organism. Each may also represent (on other occasions) an end to which the other parts and functions in the whole serve as means.[31] This definition of reciprocal internal relatedness and interdependence is essential to the definition and understanding of the term 'organism'. The animal organism, then, is the prototype to which teleological explanations refer in contributing to all entities and systems, finally, differing degrees of self-organization, self-maintenance and self-determination.

III

While Hegel's discussion of organisms and teleological explanations exhibits certain striking similarities to Whitehead's doctrine of organic mechanism, there is one important difference. Hegel clearly envisioned nature

(as did his contemporaries in the German Romantic movement) as an ascending scale of forms – what A. O. Lovejoy later termed the 'great chain of being'.[32] To this ancient notion there corresponds a certain ambiguity, evident in Hegel's *Naturphilosophie*, concerning the extent of teleological explanation throughout the scale or chain. The foregoing summary of his overall views, however, strongly suggests that Hegel viewed 'organic teleology' as coextensive throughout the scale of forms, but increasingly evident as one ascends the scale from rudimentary inorganic entities to the traditionally defined realm of living, organic systems. Finally – for Hegel as for Whitehead – the organic model alone accounts for the most generally applicable features of the natural world.

The above ambiguity is nowhere apparent in Whitehead's later theory of 'organic mechanism'. The apparent radical distinction between inorganic mechanical behaviour and organic 'self-organizing' behaviour – with which a triumphant Newtonianism had saddled Hegel and his contemporaries in Romanticism – had been itself revealed in the early twentieth century as a specious dichotomy.[33] As a result, there seemed at least briefly in the early twentieth-century climate of opinion adequate warrant for Whitehead's proposed controversial extension of teleological explanation throughout all of the natural sciences.

Notwithstanding, Hegel had argued even earlier that living organisms surely, and many inorganic processes as well, could be interpreted only in terms of a 'Concept' – an organizing pattern or principle – immanent in any organic system, and, to different degrees, generated by and constitutive of the system as a whole. Within such systems, Hegel argued, one observed precisely the kind of alteration of bare, rudimentary mechanical and chemical behaviour in response to the dominance of the overall pattern or principle which Whitehead's later theory of 'organic mechanism' also suggests.

Notes

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1 For example, this subject receives a scant 10½ unsympathetic and uninspired pages in Charles Taylor's lengthy and otherwise thorough treatment of Hegel's system (*Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 350–61) and hardly more than this in J. N. Findlay's historic 're-examination' (*Hegel: A Re-examination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 267–87). On the other hand, R. G. Collingwood found Hegel's philosophy of nature important and suggestive, claiming that it represented a transition to the 'modern view' of natural science (*The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945), 121–32). More recently, Errol E. Harris has promoted a vigorous re-evaluation of Hegel's *Naturphilosophie*. See 'The Philosophy of Nature in Hegel's System', *Review*

of Metaphysics 3 (1949), 213–28, 'Hegel and the Natural Sciences', in *Beyond Epistemology: New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy*, ed. Frederick G. Weiss (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 129–53; and 'The *Naturphilosophie* Updated', *Owl of Minerva*, 10, no. 2 (December 1978), 2–7. While my 'Whiteheadian' interpretation differs from Harris in many respects, I am deeply indebted to his work.

2 For an account of the limited influence of quantum theory on Whitehead, however, consult Abner Shimony, 'Quantum Physics and the Philosophy of Whitehead', in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), 240–61.

3 This is Whitehead's sweeping phrase denoting both materialism and deterministic accounts of causality in *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 116. Hereafter designated *SMW*.

4 Such comparisons are numerous and span a period of almost fifty years, from an initial article by Gregory Vlastos ('Organic Categories in Whitehead', *Journal of Philosophy* 34 (1937), 253–63), through subsequent comparative work by R. G. Collingwood, Errol E. Harris, Robert Whittemore and George L. Kline. I assess this tradition and make use of it in my own comparative assessment of Hegel and Whitehead, *Two Views of Freedom in Process Thought: A Study of Hegel and Whitehead* (Chico, Calif.: Scholar's Press, 1979). I trace the development of an Hegelian 'process' tradition and assess its influence on Whitehead's philosophy, in *The Genesis of Modern Process Thought: An Historical Outline with Bibliography* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1983), 99–135.

5 See Lewis S. Ford, 'Whitehead's First Metaphysical Synthesis', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (September, 1977), 251–64.

6 *SMW*, 150, 116, 156. It is clear that by 'organic mechanism' Whitehead intends a *mitigated* version of mechanism. As he states in *SMW*, 111, however, 'the only way of mitigating mechanism is by discovering that it is not mechanism'. For this reason, I regard his choice of terminology as unfortunate and misleading.

7 *SMW*, 116.

8 Note the virtual absence in the theory of 'organic mechanism', for example, of 'actual occasions' with their 'initial subjective aims' central to the later 'philosophy of organism' in *Process and Reality*. The two chapters on 'Abstraction' and 'God' added after the Lowell Lectures for subsequent publication treat 'asymmetrical relatedness' (later to become the doctrine of 'prehensions') and God as the antecedent 'Principle of Limitation', quite distinct from the more elaborate doctrine of the Primordial and Consequent natures of God found in *Process and Reality*. Ann L. Plamondon discusses Whitehead's category of organism in greater detail (but does not appear to notice the rather substantive differences in the category as used in SMW, and later in *Process and Reality*) in the second part of her recent book, *Whitehead's Organic Philosophy of Science* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1979).

9 *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 2 vols, English translation by A. V. Miller, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969). For ease of reference, I shall hereafter cite the pagination of Miller's English translation, designated *SL*, with the exception of retaining certain of Hegel's technical terminology in the original German. The following section is an interpretation of vol. II, sec. 2 on 'objectivity', *SL*, 705–54. Cf. Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, secs. 194–212.

10 *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 43, 471. Hereafter designated *PR*.

11 *SL*, 711.

12 *SL*, 713ff.

13 When considering Leibnizian entities, the 'monads', Hegel anticipates a later criticism of Whitehead, that the faultiness of Leibniz's theory lies in the fact that the monads are 'windowless', *SL*, 714; cf. sec. 194 of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*.

14 *SL*, 729. Strictly speaking, Hegel writes of 'the elements of *communication* in which they [i.e. the chemical elements] enter into external *community* with each other . . . Their previous self-subsistent *determinateness* is thus sublated in the union that conforms to the *Begriff* . . . with the result that in this reciprocal integration the striving reaches its quiescent *neutrality*.'

15 *SL*, 721–5; cf. *Enc.*, secs. 197–9. While the doctrine of the *Begriff* (Hegel's 'Concept' or 'Notion') can prove frustrating to the uninitiated, the doctrine can be fruitfully compared with Aristotle's formulation of entelechy as related to 'self-thinking thought', and Whitehead's use of the related categories of 'subjective aim' and 'initial Primordial aim'. The latter terms in the last two relations are roughly analogous to Hegel's 'Absolute Idea'. See my *Two Views of Freedom in Process Thought*, 135ff.

16 *Enc.*, sec. 335; trans. by A. V. Miller, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1970), 269.

17 *SL*, 734.

18 Prof. Errol E. Harris has argued persistently and persuasively for the *distinction* of this Hegelian–Aristotelian notion of teleological explanation (in terms of internal, self-contained and self-generated order, pattern or structure) from the more conventional understanding of teleological explanations in terms of 'purpose' (what Hegel himself scathingly denounced as 'external teleology'). See 'Teleology and Teleological Explanation', *Journal of Philosophy* 56, no. 1 (1 January 1959), 5–25; 'Mechanism and Teleology in Contemporary Thought', *Philosophy in Context* 2 (1973), 49–55; and *Foundations of Metaphysics in Science* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), *passim*.

19 *Enc.*, sec. 204. Prof. George Kline has kindly suggested certain improvements on the customary translation of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* by William Wallace, *Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975/1873), 269.

20 Cf. *Enc.*, sec. 6.

21 *SL*, 737.

22 *SL*, 766; cf. Hegel's unique argument on 'Life' treating this as an ontological category, *SL*, 761–74. See also George L. Kline, 'Life as Ontological Category: A Whiteheadian Note on Hegel', *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy*, ed. Kenneth L. Schmitz and Warren E. Steinkraus (New York: Humanities Press, 1980), 158–62.

23 Kline, 'Life as Ontological Category'. Strictly speaking, Kline applies this list to 'life as generalized ontological category' in Hegel, and 'units of living process' in Whitehead. Since Hegel proceeds to define the basic units of 'life' in the *Logic* as organisms, I understand him to be using the category in a broader sense, as Whitehead does in *SMW*. This clain is reinforced with further examples below.

24 Hegel, for example, refers to 'the organism of the State' in the *Philosophy of Right*, secs. 267, 269; cf. *Enc.*, sec. 539. In a similar sense, Whitehead refers to a factory as an organism (*SMW*, 287).

25 Hegel offers a lengthy and passionate defence of the primacy of Kepler's rationalist-deductive approach to astronomy as against Newton's inductive method (*Enc.*, sec. 270). He exhibits the marked influence of Goethe's fascinating but speculative *Farbenlehre* (*Enc.*, sec. 320), once again at Newton's expense. And Hegel seems to feel that the mythological elements (earth, air, fire and water)

are more expressive of the 'concreteness' (i.e. the many-sided, fully mediated complexity) of actual physical entities than the criterion of chemical simplicity, according to which such 'abstract and self-subsistent' elements as Oxygen and Hydrogen are regarded as primary (*Enc.*, secs. 281–4).

In fairness, however, one finds also a number of strikingly modern insights. Magnetism and electricity – those 'new' sciences which held such fascination for Schelling – likewise are singled out by Hegel as especially significant. These properties, while associated with individual physical entities, none the less 'transcend' their spatial particularity. As fields of force, magnetism and electricity bind together previously dispersed and 'self-subsistent' bits of matter into a common association. In addition, electricity and magnetism explicitly demonstrate that this binding force proceeds as a result of *opposition*. Electrical and magnetic forces are produced literally in the 'tension of opposites' (i.e. the electric and magnetic dipoles) binding the opposingly-charged poles together ultimately in one, inseparable system. In this regard, the inability to isolate the magnetic monopole seemed to Hegel especially significant: magnetic poles require, and are meaningless apart from, their opposite (*Enc.*, secs. 312–13). In retrospect, it is easy to see how, for Hegel, magnetism would have appeared as the living, concrete embodiment of his dialectical principle in nature!

Most remarkable in this vein, however, is Hegel's brief treatment of time. The Newtonian concept of time, popular in Hegel's day, asserted that time was an absolute and independent variable, a continuum 'within which' physical events and processes took place. Time itself was perceived as external to any individual process, permitting measurement of the temporal duration of that process by defining its 'beginning' and 'end'. Hence, Newtonian 'time' is not essential or constitutive of actual physical entities, and 'change' involves a purely *external* rearrangement of such immutable entities. Hegel attacks this view in the *Encyclopaedia*, substituting an alternative view, now reminiscent of Bergson and Whitehead, that time is 'Becoming directly intuited . . . it is not *in* time that everything comes to be and passes away, rather time itself is becoming, this coming-to-be and passing away, the *actually existing abstraction*' (*Enc.*, sec. 258, Miller trans).

26 *Enc.*, sec. 336; Miller trans., 270.

27 *Enc.*, sec. 346.

28 See *PR*, 166.

29 *Enc.*, sec. 349; Miller trans., 350.

30 *Enc.*, sec. 352, *Zusatz*; Miller trans., 356.

31 *Enc.*, sec. 351, *Zusatz*.

32 A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942).

33 See *SMW*, 109–38.

81

Hegel's criticism of Newton

M. J. Petry

INTRODUCTION

Even now, when we look back upon Newton's *Principia* and *Opticks* over a period of nearly three hundred years, it is difficult to imagine what modern physics would have been like had these books never been written. The experimental procedures on which they are based, their manner of exposition, the discoveries they made known, are so indispensable a part of the modern physicist's stock in trade that he would be at a loss to define his discipline at all clearly were they to be brought into fundamental discredit. Nor is it easy to make out a convincing case for regarding Newton's accomplishment as nothing more than the embodiment of his intellectual presuppositions, his world-view, his conception of scientific method. Although it cannot be denied that his works bear the marks of their time and of the conditions under which they were written, one can hardly help admitting that they also communicate a body of universal scientific knowledge. Is it at all reasonable to assume that if Newton had not announced that 'every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle with a force that varies inversely as the squares of the distances between them and directly as the products of their masses', no one else would have done so? If he had not demonstrated that 'the whiteness of the sun's light is compounded of all the primary colours mixed in due proportion', is it at all likely that we should still be ignorant of the fact?[1] Any modern physicist who takes the trouble to consult Newton's texts soon discovers, moreover, that he was able to make such discoveries because he was informed and clear-sighted enough to devise programmes of research which would still do credit to the great majority of his modern counterparts. By present-day standards Newton's scientific procedures are limited and cumbersome, but no modern physicist will have any difficulty in realizing that as a fundamental discipline they still

constitute the broad tradition within which he lives and moves and has his being.

It is of paramount importance, therefore, that anyone attempting to evaluate the present-day significance of Hegel's manner of philosophizing should take into consideration his attitude to Newtonian physics. If any attempt is to be made to establish the contemporary relevance of Hegelianism, it is essential not to overlook the fact that its originator was highly critical not only of the scientific procedures on which Newtonianism was based, but also of the conclusions being drawn from them by early nineteenth-century physicists and philosophers. What is more, this criticism was by no means a mere sideline, a fortuitous consequence of a broader strategy, something incidental to Hegel's central philosophical convictions, for he made no bones about proclaiming that he was prepared to stake his whole reputation on it. He inaugurated his career as a university teacher with a critical analysis of Newtonian mechanics, and over a period of almost thirty years made a point of publicly announcing the results of experimental work, the main object of which was to demonstrate the superiority of Goethe's theory of colours over its Newtonian counterpart.[2] To the historian of philosophy, this assessment of Newtonian science is therefore a matter of no little importance. To the contemporary thinker, to anyone aware of the directions given to modern philosophy by dialectical materialism and the Vienna Circle, to anyone attempting to convince anyone worth convincing that Hegelian methodology still warrants serious attention, it should surely be a matter of absolutely central concern.

It is worth noting, therefore, that of the fifteen thousand five hundred main courses in philosophy given in the universities of the German Federal Republic between 1945 and 1970, only two were concerned exclusively with Hegel's treatment of the natural sciences. The neglect of the subject in other countries during this period was even more complete, and one finds no reason to revise one's general assessment of it if one takes the trouble to check on the books and articles that were published. How is one to account for this almost incredible lack of intellectual curiosity? To some extent it was probably due to nothing more than the structure forced upon our university education by the need for specialists, to the widely recognized lack of communication between natural scientists, historians and philosophers. But it seems also to have been the result of bad history, of inadequate research, of the successful propagation of the simplistic idea that in Newton 'the study of nature saw a goal placed before it which, over the following two hundred years, it was to regard as the only thinkable one'.[3] Such history is never entirely harmless, but in this particular case it has contributed to the establishment of a wholly unacceptable prejudice.

NEWTON

To say that Newton's scientific accomplishment was more than simply the embodiment of his intellectual presuppositions is not to say that these presuppositions are irrelevant to the understanding of the intrinsic significance and reception of this accomplishment. The great bulk of his private papers remained unknown to the eighteenth century, but even then it was common knowledge that he was not simply a mathematician and a physicist, that powerful personal convictions had driven him to his scientific work. It was no secret, for example, that he held unorthodox views concerning the nature of the Christian Trinity. The Neoplatonism of his Cambridge colleagues, especially Henry More, had had a great influence upon him, and it was evidently within the framework of this manner of thinking that he conceived of the ontological status of causation. It was William Law who first claimed that Newton had 'ploughed with Behmen's heifer when he brought forth the discovery of the three great laws of matter and motion'.[4] Of recent years, many of his private papers have been examined and published, and modern scholarship has, if anything, tended to overemphasize the importance of his private philosophy. His most recent biographers, for example, have brought out the significance of his psychology and his alchemical interests to such an extent that there would appear to be the danger of overlooking the fact that his mathematics and physics can also be grasped and appreciated without knowing anything at all about the personal peculiarities of their author.[5]

It is not often realized that although Newton influenced nearly every branch of the physical and human sciences throughout the eighteenth century, the scientific scope of his published work is fairly limited. Although he concerned himself with nearly every branch of pure and applied mathematics, for example, he paid very little attention to the logical foundations of the science, and his contemporaries were not slow in calling attention to this neglect. Nieuwentijt, in *Gronden van Zekerheid* (1720), showed how essential it is to draw a sharp distinction between the philosophical or logical foundations of pure and of applied mathematics. Berkeley, in *The Analyst* (1734), while not calling in question the utility of the calculus or the validity of the results obtained by means of it, demonstrated clearly the difficulties implicit in its theoretical foundations. Newton was able to deal successfully with the motion of bodies in the first book of the *Principia* because he had proved that the force of attraction between two homogeneously layered spheres is directed along the line of their centres and is independent of their diameters. In his study of the miscellaneous problems of fluid mechanics in the second book he was much less successful, however, and it was left to the Bernoullis and Euler to attempt to master the highly complex questions he raised

concerning the mechanics of rigid and flexible and fluid and elastic bodies. Since the conclusions he reached concerning the motion of bodies in resisting mediums were so varied and hypothetical, he made no attempt to apply them to the solar system in the third book of the *Principia*, although it had been his original intention to do so.[6] In his *Opticks* he was highly successful in laying the foundations of the modern physical theory of light and colours, but he barely touched upon the complicated problems of colour perception. When Edmund Halley, for example, called his attention to the curious phenomena of coloured shadows, he attempted to explain them as a purely objective or physical matter, whereas it was soon to become increasingly apparent, especially to De Godart and Rumford later in the eighteenth century, that a satisfactory explanation of them would also have to involve a consideration of subjective or physiological factors.[7]

If we are to account for Newton's reputation throughout the eighteenth century, it is therefore essential that we should not confine ourselves to a consideration of his personal convictions and the obviously successful aspects of his physics. Some may have been persuaded to put his 'philosophy' into practice because they approved of his Unitarianism or Behmenism or because they had grasped the significance of his contributions to mechanics and optics, but the great majority did so because they saw him as the most distinguished exponent of the new Baconian brand of experimentalism, of applied philosophy, of the wholly universal scientific methodology which was in the process of proving the practical effectiveness of philosophy by laying the foundations of modern technology and so improving the material condition of the human lot. As President of the Royal Society of London Newton was the institutionalized head of this movement, the embodiment of the widespread conviction that natural philosophy is not merely an individual preoccupation but essentially an intersubjective or social activity. In the eyes of the general public of Europe, he was the foremost representative of the most progressive and effective intellectual movement of the time, the most distinguished proponent of the idea that nature was to be mastered in the practical interests of man through the application of the Baconian inductive method, through the testing, exchanging and co-ordinating of information by means of scientific societies and their journals.

It is worth considering rather closely the precise nature of this methodology. As against Cartesianism, it involved the rigorous exclusion of all ideas or hypotheses concerning the natural world which could not be tested against observations and verified by experiment. It shared important ground with Aristotelian physics, with Zabarella, and with the highly successful non-Baconian methods of Galileo and Hobbes in that it took the analytical and synthetic procedures of resolution and composition to be central to all scientific work. The first task of the scientist was to

classify and define his sphere of inquiry. The second was to resolve this sphere, by inductive analysis, into a series of sub-spheres or subordinate fields of inquiry, into increasingly basic or general causes or presuppositions. The third was to carry out, in the light of this analysis, a systematic reconstruction of the original field of research which would enable it to be seen in the scientific light of the basic analytical work. In Newton's *Principia*, for example, the solar system was the main sphere of inquiry, the motions of bodies in resisting and non-resisting mediums were the two major subordinate fields, and the layout of the work gave expression to Newton's conception of the interrelationship between the sub-spheres brought to light by his analytical investigations.

The ideal in Cartesian physics had been the resolution of physical investigations into mathematics, or, more precisely, into algebraic formulae. The physicist carried out his empirical investigations with the ultimate objective of discovering clear and distinct conceptions which could be expressed in mathematical terms. The purpose of Spinoza's *Algebraic Calculation of the Rainbow*, for example, was to translate the physical complexity of the phenomenon itself into a series of algebraic equations.[8] In Cartesianism, therefore, mathematics was the ultimate standard by which the success or final validity of empirical inquiry was to be judged. In Newtonianism it was not a standard but a tool which was to be used for calculating on the basis of data. Newton knew, for example, that he could make no progress with his mathematical theory concerning the motions of the Moon without the observations of the astronomer Flamsteed.[9] He was fully aware that as an intersubjective discipline mathematics was no more than the language which enables us to communicate the nature of the regularities we have discovered in nature. Although he was not always as consistent on the point as he should have been, he therefore insisted on drawing a clear distinction between the material realities being investigated and the mathematical formulation of the results of the research. In his famous letters to Richard Bentley on the religious implications of Newtonianism, for example, he censures him for losing sight of this distinction: 'You some times speak of gravity as essential and inherent to matter. Pray, do not ascribe that notion to me; for the cause of gravity is what I do not pretend to know, and therefore would take more time to consider of it.'[10]

NEWTONIANISM

Since Hegel concerned himself not only with Newton's own writings but also with those of his followers, it is essential, when dealing with the significance of his criticism of eighteenth-century physics and metaphysics, that one should distinguish between the expert Newtonianism of the

mathematicians and physicists who were aware of both the importance and the limitations of Newton's accomplishment, and the uncritical popularization of his ideas. We have already noticed that although no one who knew anything at all about mathematics and physics could possibly have doubted the usefulness of the calculus, many of the experts were puzzled and perplexed concerning its logical foundations and the ontological status of the computations that could be made by means of it. The prevailing conception of physical reality was that it was basically atomistic. In thinking about the occurrence of motion within this reality, eighteenth-century mathematicians and physicists were therefore obliged to wrestle with the ancient paradoxes of space, time and motion put forward by Zeno, which had been restated with admirable clarity and sharpness and brought to the attention of the general public by means of Bayle's *Dictionary*. Since it was not yet general practice to distinguish between the purely formal or mathematical aspect of the calculus and its ontological significance, Zeno's paradoxes concerning physical reality gave rise to mathematical perplexities. Berkeley criticized Newton's fluxions as being 'the ghosts of departed quantities', and argued that the idea of supposing a finite ratio to exist between two absolutely evanescent terms was absurd and unintelligible. Newton's views on the existence of variables which reach their limits were therefore brought into general discussion, and his followers were obliged to reject the idea of the existence of infinitely small quantities. One of the best modern histories of the development of the calculus therefore characterizes the eighteenth century as 'the period of indecision'.[11] It was only towards the end of it, and during the early decades of the nineteenth century, that such mathematicians as Lagrange, Lacroix and Cauchy began to lay the foundations of a rigorous formulation of the calculus by distinguishing with increasing sharpness between its formal and its applied aspects.

Newton's cosmology was also the subject of constant questioning and revision among the experts during the eighteenth century. Buffon attempted to explain the origin of the centrifugal force within the solar system by postulating a collision between the Sun and a comet as a result of which a jet of matter had been torn away from the Sun's surface and had condensed into the planets at various distances from the central body. Laplace suggested that the solar system had originated from an immense incandescent nebula, rotating from west to east, which had eventually broken up into the rotating masses of the solar bodies. The observation of irregularities in the movements of Mercury and of the new planet Uranus discovered in 1781 made it a matter of general knowledge that Newton's law of gravitation could not easily account for all planetary motions.[12]

Apart from the discovery of the importance of physiological factors in the perception of colour, the scientists of the eighteenth century also

found it necessary to supplement and revise Newton's ideas on the physics of light. Newton had argued, for example, that since all refracting substances disperse the prismatic colours in a constant proportion to their mean refraction, refraction could not be produced without colour, and no improvement could therefore be expected from the refracting telescope. As early as 1733, however, a telescope exhibiting objects free from colour had been constructed, and by 1758 John Dollond had made the invention public. In 1800 Thomas Young published a paper in which he criticized Newton's rejection of Huyghens' undulatory theory of light, and after calling attention to similarities between the phenomena of sound and light, suggested that a wave theory of light would be an improvement upon Newton's corpuscular theory in providing the basis for progressive research in the field.[13]

While the experts were engaged in developing and revising Newton's contributions to the three main fields in which he had published, and while the technologists were reaping the benefits of a well-founded experimentalism, various popular philosophers were engaged in puffing Newtonianism up into a dogma, a world-view. These popularizers had little interest in Newton's private philosophy, his Unitarianism, Neoplatonism or Behmenism, and the last thing they were capable of doing was appreciating the significance of his methodology, an attempt to exclude hypothetical theorizing by means of rigorous experimentalism, the practical and theoretical implications of the methods of resolution and composition, the conception of mathematics as a tool and not as a standard, the distinction between material reality and the mathematical formulation of the results of research. Their object was to enlist their interpretation of the scientific advances being made in the service of their conception of enlightenment, and they were not prepared to confine enlightenment to the sober and carefully formulated objectives of Baconianism. The social ideal put forward in Bacon's *New Atlantis* is a Christian monarchy in which institutions cultivating the natural sciences are encouraged by the government as part of a broad policy of furthering social harmony and welfare. Voltaire's book on Newton was part of his general programme of opposition to the Church and monarchical absolutism. Enlightenment was to be exhibited as incompatible with clericalism and monarchism, and as involving the application of an attitude of mind which had proved its effectiveness in revolutionizing man's conception of the natural world, to the solution of social and cultural problems.[14]

This Newtonian world-view tended to draw its inspiration not from Newton himself, or from the experts who were engaged in the apparently dry and short-sighted business of developing the rather specialized fields of scientific research he had opened up, but from those engaged in popularizing natural science – the schoolteachers, the itinerant lecturers, the ordinary run of university teachers, the writers of textbooks and

encyclopaedias. It is important to remember that the eighteenth century, no less than the nineteenth, was the great age of popularized and potted natural science. It was still possible for the layman to get a fairly good grasp of fairly comprehensive fields of inquiry by applying himself to a textbook or attending a series of lectures. As we have seen from the extract from his letter to Bentley, Newton was well aware that when he used the concept of force in order to bring various qualitatively distinct fields of research in relation to the law of gravitation and hence within the scope of quantitative computation, a distinction had to be drawn between the mathematical and physical significance of his expositions. Those who popularized his work were often entirely unaware of the necessity of this distinction, and proceeded without inhibition to treat all branches of natural science as nothing more than quantitative procedures, exploration of the whole extent of which was simply a matter of computation. As Koyré has pointed out, one of the most pernicious results of this methodological confusion was that 'the eighteenth century, with very few exceptions, became reconciled to the ununderstandable'.[15] When considering the intrinsic significance of Hegel's criticism of Newton it is certainly worth noting, therefore, that he had in his private library not only Newton's works, but also several of the most popular and influential expositions of them.[16]

What seems to have fascinated the popular scientists of the eighteenth century more than anything else was Newton's postulation of the two mutually opposed forces inherent within planetary motion. Just as the opposition between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces was used to enlighten the interested layman as to the true nature of elliptical orbits, of a planet's radius vector always describing equal areas in equal times, of the cubes of the mean distances of the planets from the Sun being proportional to the squares of their times of revolution, so similarly opposed forces were postulated in order to account for the most diverse phenomena. Everything was to be made philosophical by being exhibited as arising out of the interaction of opposites, and hence as an illustration and confirmation of the central Newtonian insight. It seems unlikely that the universality with which the idea was accepted was entirely unrelated to the ease with which it may be comprehended. What is more, the grasping of this simple triadicity had the inestimable advantage of opening up the most diverse fields of inquiry to philosophical interpretation without requiring that the philosopher should be too deeply acquainted with the perplexing intricacies of empirical research. The Yugoslavian Jesuit Roger Boscovich extended the theory of gravitation to the nature of the atom, which he took to be the non-spatial point-centre of the opposed forces of attraction and repulsion. The Scottish chemist Joseph Black, though by no means averse to exact empirical research, attempted to base the whole of physics and chemistry upon the Newtonian conception

of opposing forces. The English Roman Catholic John Needham, as the result of his use of the microscope in examining organisms, attempted to prove that animals are brought to life from putridity, that they are formed by an expansive and a resistant force, and that they degenerate into vegetables. The Dutch civil servant Frans Hemsterhuis imported the Newtonian forces into psychology, and made use of mathematical analogies in explicating the nature of human desires and abnegations. The Irish statesman Edmund Burke, in a work on aesthetics which anticipates Romanticism, related the twin emotions towards the sublime and the beautiful to the expansion and contraction of the nerves. The German polymath Johann von Herder even attempted to define God as the supreme unification of opposed forces.[17]

This eighteenth-century obsession with the uncritical postulation of opposed forces in the most diverse and heterogeneous contexts could be dismissed as nothing more than a harmless academic eccentricity were it not for the catastrophic effect it had upon people's lives through the way in which it influenced medical practice. During the seventeenth century Lorenzo Bellini had put forward the not entirely improbable idea that virtually all pathological states were the result of aberrations in the circulation of blood. Taking this interesting suggestion to be a verified truth, Archibald Pitcairne set about transforming the medical sciences into a branch of Newtonian mathematics. What Pitcairne lacked in common sense he made up for in self-assurance. In his inaugural oration at the University of Leiden (1691) he maintained that empirical investigation, the search for physical causes, was 'entirely useless and unnecessary to physicians', and that it was 'not allowable to advance anything into a principle either in the theory or practice of medicine, which is called in question by the mathematicians'. This general approach was inflated into a comprehensive Newtonian 'philosophy' of the medical sciences by Richard Mead, who displayed a certain genius for dressing up even the most fantastic hypotheses in the form of mathematical truths. The movement reached its climax in the Continental influence exercised by the medical writings of the Scotsman John Brown. According to Brown, the health of an organism depends upon its maintaining a due equilibrium between its inherent 'excitability' and various stimuli. Consequently, disease is the result of either over- or under-stimulation. All the doctor has to do, therefore, is to prescribe the right means for correcting the equilibrium. Although the beautiful simplicity of this totally quantified and mathematicizable medicine failed to impress Brown's countrymen, it was taken up with great enthusiasm all over the Continent. It stimulated academic passions to such an extent that in Göttingen in 1802, for example, a troop of Hanoverian cavalry had to be used to put down the rioting which broke out between Brown's disciples and their opponents. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Brown managed to kill more

people by means of his medicine that Napoleon did by means of his wars.[18]

It could be argued with some justification that by resolving such concepts as atoms, chemical compounds, organisms etc. into two components, and then reconstructing the original unity from out of these 'opposites', the eighteenth-century popularizers of Newtonianism were doing something not so very different from Newton himself when he applied the method of resolution and composition. It should be noted, however, that Newton and those who made genuine advances upon his work would never have dreamed of deciding beforehand that the analysis of a complex field of inquiry can only bring to light two significant subfields and that these have always to be regarded as 'opposites'. The truth of the matter is that those who dealt in these triads were nearly always guilty of not having considered the significance of Newton's distinction between pure and applied mathematics. They were in fact foisting an entirely arbitrary formalistic interpretation upon fields of research in which genuine experimental work, a valid inductive search for causes or presuppositions, would have yielded not tidy triads but a whole multitude of distinctly untidy and certainly perplexing sub-disciplines. It was, of course, easier to accept Pitcairne's advice and plump for the facility of a mathematical solution, disregarding the distinction between its pure and applied aspects. In doing so, however, they were rendering themselves incapable of making any authentic contribution to scientific knowledge, and therefore disqualifying themselves as genuine natural philosophers.

Although the methodological confusions out of which this manner of thinking arose were essentially those of the natural sciences, towards the end of the eighteenth century they began to be used in the development of a new brand of historicism. A monstrous misrepresentation of physical reality began to give birth to an even more monstrous philosophy of history. Kant, in his review of Herder's main work on the subject, gave forthright expression to the apprehension with which he regarded this new development:

> What is one to think of the hypothesis of invisible forces producing organization, and the device of attempting to explain what one does not understand by means of what one understands even less? To assume an affinity among them, whereby either one genus would have arisen from the other and all from one original genus, or possibly from one generative mother womb, would give rise to ideas so monstrous that reason recoils from them.[19]

In one instance, and in one instance only, did this naive faith in the relevance of purely *a priori* mathematical or triadic reasoning to the organization of empirical research give rise to a significant scientific

discovery. As early as 1724 Christian Wolff observed that 'If one divides the distance of the Earth from the Sun into 10 parts, the distance of Mercury consists of 4 of them, that of Venus 7, that of Mars 15, that of Jupiter 52, and that of Saturn 95.' Even before the discovery of Uranus in 1781, the distance of which was found to consist of 196 parts, Heinrich Lambert put forward the idea that it might be worth while to look for a planet moving in the gap between Mars and Jupiter. Johann Titius opined that the 'Lord Architect' of the universe would never have violated the regularity of the arithmetical series by leaving the gap empty. The Berlin astronomer Johann Bode suggested that it was unlikely that the 'Founder of the Universe' would have tolerated such untidiness. Piety and a faith in the *a priori* validity of mathematics, in a tidy universe, motivated the search for a planetary body to complete the series, and on 1 January 1801, they were rewarded when an Italian astronomer discovered the largest asteroid.[20]

HEGEL

In a few lines at the end of his inaugural dissertation on the planetary orbits, which he defended at the University of Jena at the end of August 1801, Hegel criticizes Bode's uncritical projection of an *a priori* mathematical pattern on to the empirical facts provided by observation, and suggests, evidently not without some irony, that the sequence attributed to the demiurge by Plato might provide a better guide to research, since it not only accounts for the known planetary sequence, but also simplifies consideration of the satellites of Jupiter and Saturn. Hegel should have known that the empirical facts had been altered by the observation of 1 January, 1801, but it is, perhaps, worth remembering that no theoretical justification for Bode's Law has yet been found, and that the discovery of Neptune in 1846 disproved it to some extent.[21]

Just prior to Hegel's arrival at Jena, his friend Schelling had developed a new form of natural philosophy which drew its inspiration from the popular triadic Newtonianism of Herder and the teleological thinking analysed and advocated by Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*. According to Schelling, the analytical work carried out by the various branches of the natural sciences is to be used as the basis for viewing the whole of nature from the telos of consciousness. Consciousness is to comprehend nature as a hierarchy or sequence of levels approximating with increasing degrees of adequacy to that which is comprehending them. Hegel accepted the broad outlines of Schelling's conception, but criticized him severely for relying too heavily upon Herder and the popularizers, for not paying enough attention to the empiricists and the scientific pro-

fessionals, and for failing to apply the methods of resolution and composition to their findings with the requisite rigour.[22]

It would be no exaggeration to say that until very recently the only outcome of research into Hegel's philosophy of the natural sciences has been an almost universal miscomprehension of its criticism of Bode's Law and a totally undifferentiated assessment of his indebtedness to Schelling.

In his inaugural dissertation, as in all the systematic works he published after 1801, Hegel's methodology involves a radical and comprehensive application of the methods of resolution and composition to the general state of knowledge and research in the empirical sciences. With regard to the problem of motion, for example, he accepts Kant's conclusion that space and time, without which there could be no motion, are the *a priori* elements, the presuppositions of our knowledge of the natural world. He also points out, however, that not only our knowledge, but also the natural world itself, presupposes space, time and motion. What is more, space, time and simple mechanical motions can be systematically considered without also considering their specific involvement in planetary, plant or animal movements, whereas these movements cannot be considered without presupposing the more universal factors of space, time and mechanics. It is therefore essential to a clear and consistent natural philosophy, and indeed to any other branch of philosophy, that such asymmetrical relationships should be borne in mind when dealing with the multifarious details and the metaphysical pretensions of the empirical sciences.[23]

Kant had shown that not only space and time, but also certain universal logical categories have to be regarded as the systematic presuppositions of human knowledge. In this respect also, Hegel extends the presuppositional structure of Kant's conception to include the natural world, and treats the working out of the systematic interrelationships between logical categories by means of the methods of resolution and composition as a philosophical science antecedent to natural philosophy. It is within this fundamental or purely abstract science that he works out the asymmetrical relationships subsisting between the logical categories employed in mathematics. Taking the unit to be the most basic category of pure mathematics, he develops a survey of the logical structure of the various branches of the science by indicating the way in which measure, ratio, infinity, intensive and extensive magnitude, number, quantity etc. are systematically interrelated. He is, therefore, in full agreement with the mathematicians of his time – Lagrange, Lacroix, Cauchy etc. – who were attempting to establish a logical foundation for the calculus by drawing a sharp distinction between its formal and its applied aspects. Although the methodological basis of his distinction between pure and applied mathematics is not identical with theirs, it certainly justifies his joining them in their criticism of the uncritical Newtonianism of those who were

unaware of the necessity of distinguishing between mathematics and physics. He first published his critical analysis of the logical and categorial structure of mathematics in 1812, and he revised it with detailed reference to current developments at the end of his life. It is, therefore, high time that someone attempted to place it in the general context of ideas on the logical foundations of mathematics.[24]

Since Hegel pays so much attention to the categorial structure of pure mathematics, it cannot be said that he regards the science simply as a tool in the hands of the physicist. He is ready to admit, however, that the physicist can make valid use of it in communicating the formal structure of the regularities he has discovered in nature. He himself makes good use of mathematics in his expositions of celestial mechanics and musical sounds, for example, and he praises J. B. Richter for having followed up Kant's suggestion and developed stoichiometry, the calculation of the ratios in which chemical substances have an effect upon one another, as a branch of applied mathematics.[25] What he never fails to object to is the failure to realize that such calculations are quite distinct from empirical research, and the metaphysical theorizing that can arise out of this confusion:

> The import of this reflection is simply this, that the distinctions and determinations employed by mathematical analysis, and of course to which its methods commit it, should be sharply distinguished from whatever is supposed to have a physical reality. It is not the assumptions, procedures, and results which analysis requires and affords which are questioned here, but the physical worth and the physical significance of its determination and procedure. It is here that attention should be concentrated, in order to explain why physical mechanics has been flooded by a monstrous metaphysic, which, contrary to both experience and the Notion, has it sole source in these mathematical determinations.[26]

What Hegel proposes as the alternative to the confusions of popular Newtonianism is a systematic treatment of the mechanical sciences very similar to that of the *Principia*. Just as Newton's use of the analytical and synthetic procedures of resolution and composition had led him to break down the solar system, his major sphere of inquiry, into the two subordinate fields of the motions of bodies in resisting and non-resisting mediums, so Hegel's use of these procedures led him to break down the same major sphere into the subordinate fields of Kepler's laws, universal gravitation, fall, impact, inertia, matter, motion etc. He works out the subordinate asymmetrical relationships between these fields with greater precision than Newton, and the details of his exposition reflect the empirical advances made during the intervening period. Evidently building upon

the work of the Bernoullis and Euler, for example, he treats the subject matter of Newton's second book, the mechanics of rigid and flexible and fluid and elastic bodies, as having its systematic context in physics rather than mechanics, that is to say, as presupposing the simpler motions of classical mechanics.[27] In thus revising the general complexity relationships of eighteenth-century mechanics and physics, he evidently relied fairly heavily upon the work of the French mathematician and physicist L. B. Francœur. Once again, one can only hope that the precise nature of his assessment of this basic work will eventually be submitted to a thorough investigation.[28]

To a great extent, Hegel's criticism of Newton's *Opticks* was determined by his acceptance of the general validity of the theory put forward in Goethe's *Theory of Colours*. Both Hegel and Goethe performed a large number of experiments involving the passage of light through various mediums – gases, liquids, crystals etc. From them they drew the conclusion that coloured light is not, as Newton had maintained, the result of the resolution of the composite nature of white light into its constituents, but that it arises from the homogeneous nature of white light being dimmed or darkened by a medium. The colours which appear when white light is passed through a prism, for example, are not the result of its being resolved into its constituents, but of its being dimmed in a series of gradations resulting from the various degrees of refraction brought about by the physical structure of the prism.

Although a modern scientist has to regard Goethe's theory of the physics of light and colours as essentially erroneous, it was a plausible hypothesis at the time, and it was backed up with some first-rate experimental work and a critical analysis of Newton's experiments and the conclusions he drew from them which is still worth taking seriously and examining in detail. The most valuable part of Goethe's *Theory of Colours* is not its physics, however, but the contribution it makes to our understanding of the perception of colour. Goethe explored the implications of the discoveries made by Halley, De Godart and Rumford, and showed conclusively that the explanation of phenomena such as coloured shadows involved consideration of physiological as well as physical factors. Heisenberg has therefore pointed out that Newton's and Goethe's contributions to our understanding of colour are in fact complementary.[29]

Hegel's handling of the Newton–Goethe controversy is by no means as satisfactory as it would have been had he made proper use of his own philosophical principles. He could easily have provided a systematic assessment of Newton's *Opticks* in his *Physics* and a corresponding assessment of Goethe's theory in his *Physiology* and *Psychology*, and so brought out the complementary nature of the two apparently rival approaches. He decided instead to treat the physiological and psychological

aspects of colour perception in an extremely cursory manner, and to concentrate upon defending Goethe and refuting Newton in respect of the physics of light. Although he accepted Goethe's postulate of the essential homogeneity of white light, he also regarded it as involving a complexity of motions which required that it should be classified as a physical rather than a merely mechanical phenomenon. As a field of inquiry, he therefore took white light to be the initiation of the sphere of physics, in the sense that its motions constitute the absolute presupposition of physical phenomena. He also regarded colour as an essentially physical phenomenon, but since he took it to involve not only white light but also the darkening of white light, he could only deal with it within a rational or systematic physics once the factors in this darkening had also been given their systematic exposition. In his *Physics*, therefore, the treatment of light is followed by the treatment of specific gravity, cohesion, shape, magnetism, crystallography, transparency, refraction etc. Only once refraction has been given its systematic exposition does he present his theory of colours, his criticism of Newton and his defence of Goethe. The implication of this procedure is not, of course, that white light and colours do not occur together in the physical world, but simply that a systematic or philosophical exposition of colour involves such an analytical and synthetic survey of its presuppositions, of the factors in its occurrence which have been brought to light by empirical physics.[30]

CONCLUSION

Despite the limitedness of the fields in which he published, Newton's contribution to natural science is still an integral part of modern physics, largely on account of the excellence of his experimental work and his realistic assessment of the significance of mathematics. When attempting to gauge the significance of Hegel's criticism of this contribution, it is therefore essential that a distinction should be drawn between Newton's own work and the way in which it was interpreted and exploited throughout the eighteenth century. As we have shown, the main thrust of Hegel's arguments is directed against the Newtonians of his own time rather than Newton himself. Even the very limited research carried out so far has made it clear that in such fields as the logical foundations of mathematics, the basic methodology of the science of mechanics, even the perception of colour, Hegel's work has to be regarded as complementing rather than refuting Newton's. What is more, both Newton and Hegel insisted that all valid knowledge concerning the natural world must be based upon observation and experiment, both made good use of the methods of resolution and composition, and both objected forthrightly to the meta-

physics of those intent upon popularizing empirical knowledge for non-scientific purposes.

If there is a fundamental difference between them, it is that between the natural scientist, wholly preoccupied with the empirical precision and the pragmatic significance of his discoveries, and the philosopher, primarily concerned with the wider implications of the methodology of the sciences. These are, however, not mutually exclusive but complementary interests, and even a cursory reading of Hegel's writings on the natural sciences will soon show that he was well aware of the fact.

Notes

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2 Hegel, *De orbitis planetarum*, ed. and tr. F. De Gandt (1801; Paris, 1979); *Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and tr. M. J. Petry, 3 vols. (1842; London, 1970), II: 135–60 (§ 320).

3 E. J. Dijksterhuis, *De Mechanisering van het Wereldbeeld* (Amsterdam, 1977), 543.

4 *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* (1966, XXI: 124–5; Stephen Hobhouse, *Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme* (Belgrade, 1937).

5 F. E. Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton* (London, 1980); R. S. Westfall, *Never at Rest. A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, 1980), emphasizes the importance of Newton's *unpublished* alchemical notes.

6 C. Truesdell, 'Reactions of Late Baroque Mechanics to Success, Conjecture, Error, and Failure in Newton's *Principia*', in R. Palter, *The Annus Mirabilis of Sir Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 192–234.

7 *Opticks*, bk 1, prop. X, Prob. V, p. 183; *Journal de Physique de Rozier* (1776), VIII: 270; *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (1794), pt I, p. 107.

8 *Spinoza. Kernmomenten in zijn denken* (Baarn, 1977), 31–43.

9 *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton 1694–1709*, ed. J. F. Scott (Cambridge, 1967), IV: 87–303.

10 *Correspondence*, III: 233–43.

11 C. B. Boyer, *The History of the Calculus and its Conceptual Development* (Dover Books, 1959), ch. vi.

12 G. L. L. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle* (Paris, 1749–1804), supplement vol. V; P. S. Laplace, *Exposition du système du monde* (Paris, 1796); N. R. Hanson,'Leverrier: The Zenith and Nadir of Newtonian Mechanics', *Isis* 53 (1962): 359–78.

13. *Opticks*, bk 1, pt i, prop. 7, theor. 6; *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (1758), 733–43; vol. 90 (1800), 106; H. J. Steffens, *The Development of Newtonian Optics in England* (New York, 1977); K. F. Weinmann, *Die Natur des Lichts* (Darmstadt, 1980), 83–135.

14 *Elemens de la philosophie de Neuton, mis à la portée de tout le monde* (Amsterdam, 1738).

15 Alexandre Koyré *Newtonian Studies* (London, 1965), 163.

16 *Verzeichniss der von dem Professor . . . Hegel . . . hinterlassenen Bücher-Sammlung* (Berlin, 1832), nos 1277–1515; Colin Maclaurin *An Account of Sir*

Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, 1748: French tr. 1749; Latin tr. from French, Vienna, 1761); Benjamin Martin, *A Plain and Familiar Introduction to the Newtonian Philosophy*, German translation, Berlin, 1778.

17 L. L. Whyte, *Roger Joseph Boscovich* (New York, 1964); A. L. Donovan, *Philosophical Chemistry in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1975); J. T. Needham, *Nouvelles observations microscopiques* (Paris, 1750); F. Hemsterhuis, *Lettre sur les desirs* in *Oeuvres philosophiques* (Paris, 1809), I: 61–90: E. Burke, *On the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. I. T. Bulton (1757; London, 1958): J. G. Herder, *Gott, einige Gesprache*, ed. F. H. Burkhardt (1787; New York, 1940).

18 *The Works of Dr Archibald Pitcairne* (London, 1704), 10; *Authentic Memoirs of the Life of Richard Mead* (London, 1755; W. Coleman, 'Mechanical Philosophy and Hypothetical Physiology', in Palter, pp. 322–32; Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, III: 378–80.

19 Kant. *Werke* (Akademie Ausgabe, 1784/5), VIII: 43–58.

20 H. A. M. Snelders, 'Numerology in German Romanticism', *Janus* 60 (1973): 25–40.

21 B. Beaumont, 'Hegel and the Seven Planets' *Mind* 63 (1954): 246–8; Hegel, *De Orbitis Planetarum*.

22 *Philosophy of Nature*, I: 46–8, 179–93.

23 *Philosophy of Nature* I: 223–44, 260–83; III: 49, 102–7.

24 *Wissenschaft der Logik* ed. G. Lasson, 2 pts (Hamburg, 1975), 154–387, *Philosophy of Nature*, I: 336–8.

25 *Philosophy of Nature*, I: 263–821; II: 73–81, 210–13.

26 *Philosophy of Nature*, I: 265.

27 *Philosophy of Nature*, II: 42–69.

28 *Philosophy of Nature*, I: 264, 332; L. B. Francœur, *Traité elémentaire de mécanique* (Paris, 1801).

29 'Die Goethesche und die Newtonsche Farbenlehre im Lichte der modernen Physik' in *Wandlungen in den Grundlagen der Naturwissenschaft* (1941; Hamburg, 1967).

30 *Philosophy of Nature*, II: 9–160.

Philosophy of Mind

Hegel's philosophy of mind

Charles Taylor

As with any highly systematic body of thought, Hegel's philosophy of mind can be reconstructed from many perspectives. Each one gives us something, though some are more illuminating than others. But I believe that it is particularly illuminating to see Hegel's philosophy of mind through the perspective of his philosophy of action. This is, of course, hardly a surprising doctrine. Mind (*Geist*) for Hegel is thoroughgoing activity (*Tätigkeit*). But I think the insights from this perspective can be enlivened and made more penetrating if we relate Hegel's thought to a set of perennial issues that have been central to the philosophy of action in modern times. This is what I want to attempt in this paper.

At the same time, a study of this kind can be interesting in another way. Understanding Hegel's contribution to the developing modern debate on the nature of action helps us to understand the historical development of this debate. And this, I would like to argue, is important for understanding the debate itself.

I

We can perhaps identify one fundamental issue which has been left open in the philosophy of action in modern times. To do so, of course, requires some interpretation of the history of modern philosophy, and this as always can be subject to controversy. The precise question which defines this issue was not asked in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and is rather one which is central to our twentieth-century debate. But I want to claim nevertheless that different answers to this question were espoused earlier, as one can see from a number of related philosophical doctrines which *were* expressly propounded, and which depend on these answers.

I hope the plausibility of this reading will emerge in the course of the whole argument.

This being said, I will baldly identify my central issue in unashamedly contemporary terms: what is the nature of action? Or otherwise put, what distinguishes (human) action from other kinds of events? What are the peculiar features of action?

One family of views distinguishes actions by the kind of cause which brings them about. Actions are events which are peculiar in that they are brought about by desires, or intentions, or combinations of desires and beliefs. As events, actions may be described among other ways as physical movements. (Although one would have to be generous with the term 'physical movements', so as to include cases of non-movement, as for example with the action we would describe as 'He stood still.') In this, they resemble a host of other events which are not actions. What distinguishes them is a peculiar type of psychological cause: that they are brought on by desires or intentions. Of course, to hold this is not necessarily to hold that psychological explanations are ultimate. One can also look forward to their reduction to some neurophysiological or physical theory. But in that case, the burden of distinguishing action from non-action would be taken over by antecedents differently described: perhaps some peculiar kind of firing in the cortex, which was found to be the basis for what we identify psychologically as desire.

A view of this kind seems to have been implicit in much of Donald Davidson's work.[1] But the basic conception goes back, I believe, at least to the seventeenth century. A conception of this kind was in a sense even more clearly at home in the basically dualist outlook common both to Cartesian and empiricist philosophers. Qua bodily movements actions resembled all other events. What distinguished them was their inner, 'mental' background. Within the bounds of this outlook, there was a clear ontological separation between outer event and inner background.

Against this, there is another family of views which sees action as qualitatively different from non-action, in that actions are what we might call intrinsically directed. Actions are in a sense inhabited by the purposes which direct them, so that action and purpose are ontologically inseparable. The basic intuition here is not hard to grasp, but it is difficult to articulate it very clearly. What is in any case clear is that this view involves a clear negation of the first: we cannot understand action in terms of the notions of undiscriminated event and a particular kind of cause; this is to explain it in terms of other primitive concepts. But for the second view, action is itself a primitive: there is a basic qualitative distinction between action and non-action. To the extent that action can be further explicated in terms of a concept like 'purpose', this turns out not to be independently understandable. For the purpose is not ontologically separable from the action, and this means something like: it can

only exist in animating this action; or its only articulation as a purpose is in animating the action; or perhaps a fundamental articulation of this purpose, on which all others depend, lies in the action.

This second view thus resists the basic approach of the first. We cannot understand action by first identifying it as an undifferentiated event (because it is qualitatively distinct), and then distinguishing it by some separably identifiable cause (because the only thing which could fill this function, the purpose, is not separably identifiable). One of the roots of this doctrine is plainly Aristotle's thesis of the inseparability of form and matter, and we can see that in contrast to Cartesianism and empiricism, it is plainly anti-dualist. This is not to say that proponents of the first view are necessarily dualist – at least not simply so; just that their conception permits of dualism, whereas the qualitative distinction thesis does not.

One of the issues which is thus bound up with that of the nature of action is the question of dualism. Another which I want briefly to mention here is the place of the subject. It is clear that the distinction between action and non-action is one that occurs to us as agents. Indeed, one can argue plausibly that a basic, not further reducible distinction between action and what just happens is indispensable and ineradicable from our self-understanding as agents.[2] That is, it is impossible to function as an agent at all unless one marks a distinction of this kind.

In this context, we can understand part of the motivation for the first, or causal, theory of action as lying in the aspiration to go beyond the subjective standpoint of the agent, and come to an understanding of things which is objective. An objective understanding in this sense would be one which was no longer tied to a particular viewpoint, imprisoned in the categories which a certain viewpoint imposes. If agency seems to impose the qualitative conception of action, then the causal one can appear as a superior analysis, an objective portrayal of the way things really stand, of the real components of action *an sich*. This drive for objectivity, or what Bernard Williams has called 'absolute' descriptions,[3] was one of the animating motives of both Cartesianism and empiricism.

Now Hegel is clearly a proponent of the second, qualitative conception of action. And indeed, he emerges out of a climate in which this conception was staging a comeback after the ascendancy of Cartesian and empiricist views. In one sense, the comeback can be seen to start with Leibniz, but the tenor of much late-eighteenth-century thought in Germany was of this stamp. The reaction against dualism, the recovery of the subject, the rehabilitation of Aristotle-type inseparability doctrines – notably in the conception of the aesthetic object in Kant's *Third Critique* – all pushed towards, and indeed, articulated themselves through this understanding of action. I now want to develop its ramifications to show how central it is to Hegel's thought, and in particular his theory of mind.

II

The first important ramification of the qualitative theory is that it allows what I shall call agent's knowledge. The notion is that we are capable of grasping our own action in a way that we cannot come to know external objects and events. In other words, there is a knowledge we are capable of concerning our own action which we can attain as the doers of this action; and this is different from the knowledge we may gain of objects we observe or scrutinize.

This qualitative distinction in kinds of knowledge is grounded on the qualitative view of action. Action is distinct in that it is directed, aimed to encompass ends or purposes. And this notion of directedness is part of our conception of agency: the agent is the being responsible for the direction of action, the being for whom and through whom action is directed as it is. The notion of action is normally correlative to that of an agent.

Now if we think of this agent as identical with the subject of knowledge, then we can see how there can be different kinds of knowledge. One kind is gained by making articulate what we are doing, the direction we are already imprinting on events in our action. As agents, we will already have some sense, however dim, inarticulate or subliminal, of what we are doing; otherwise, we could not speak of directing at all. So agent's knowledge is a matter of bringing this sense to formulation, articulation or full consciousness. It is a matter of making articulate something we already have an inarticulate sense of.

This evidently contrasts with knowlege of other objects, the things we observe and deal with in the world. Here we are learning about things external to our action, which we may indeed act with or on, but which stand over against action.

Now the first, or causal view, cannot draw this contrast. To begin with, we can see why it was not concerned to: because the contrast is one which is evident from the agent's standpoint: agent's knowledge is available to the knower only qua agent, and thus from his standpoint. It cannot be recognized as knowledge from the absolute standpoint. Thus for the causal view, my action is an external event like any other, only distinct in having a certain kind of cause. I cannot claim to know it in some special way.

Of course, what I can claim 'privileged access' to is my desire, or intention – the cause of my action. And here we come closest to an analogous distinction within the causal view to that between agent's and observer's knowledge. In the original formulations of Cartesianism and empiricism, I am transparently or immediately aware of the contents of my mind. It may be accorded that I am immediately, even incorrigibly aware that I want to eat an apple or that I intend to eat this apple. But

of the consequences of this desire or intention, viz, my consuming the apple, I have knowledge like that of any other external event: I observe it.

We might then contrast the two views by noting that the causal view too recognizes two kinds of knowledge, but it draws the boundaries quite differently, between 'inner' and 'outer' reality. But we would have to add that this difference of location of the boundary goes along with a quite different view of what the knowledge consists of. The notion of immediate or incorrigible knowlege makes sense in the context of dualism, of a separate domain of inner, mental space, of which we can say at least that its *esse* entails its *percipi*. The contrast will be something like that between immediate and inferential knowledge, or the incorrigible and the revisable.

Once we draw the boundary in the way the qualitative theory does, there is no question of incorrigibility. We may never be without some sense of what we are doing, but coming to have knowledge is coming to formulate that correctly, and we may only do this in a partial or distorted fashion. Nor is this knowledge ever immediate; it is, on the contrary, mediated by our efforts at formulation. We have indeed a different mode of access to what we are doing, but it is questionable whether we should dub this access 'privileged'. Neither immediacy nor incorrigibility are marks of agent's knowledge.

In a sense this idea of agent's knowledge originates in modern thought with Vico. But since his work did not have the influence it deserved in the eighteenth century, we should perhaps see Kant as the important seminal figure. Not that Kant allowed a full-blooded notion of agent's knowlege. Indeed, he shied away from using the word 'knowledge' in this context. But he made the crucial distinction between our empirical knowledge of objects on one hand, and the synthetic *a priori* truths which we can establish on the other about the mathematical and physical structure of things. In Kant's mind it is clear that we can only establish the latter with certainty because they are in an important sense our own doing.

Perceiving the world involves not just the reception of information, but crucially also our own conceptual activity, and we can know for certain the framework of empirical reality, because we ourselves provide it.

Moreover, in Kant's procedure of proof of these synthetic *a priori* truths, he shows them to be essential conditions of undeniable features of experience, such as that we mark a distinction between the objective and the subjective in experience, or that the 'I think' must be able to accompany all our representations. Later he will show the postulates of freedom, God and immortality as essential conditions of the practice of determining our action by moral precepts. If we ask what makes these starting points allegedly undeniable, I think the answer can only be that

we can be sure of them because they are what we are *doing*, when we perceive the world, or determine our action on moral grounds.[4]

Kant thus brings back into the centre of modern epistemological debate the notion of activity and hence of agent's knowledge. Cartesian incorrigibility, the immediate knowledge I have of myself as a thinking substance, is set aside. In its place come the certainties which we do not have immediately, but can gain, concerning not some substance, or any object of knowledge whatever, but the structures of our own activity. What we learn by this route is only accessible by this route. It is something quite different from the knowledge of objects.

This has been an immensely influential idea in modern philosophy. One line of development from Kant lies through Schopenhauer, who distinguished our grasp of ourselves as representation and as will, and from this through Wittgenstein into modern British analytical philosophy, for example in Miss Anscombe's notion of 'non-observational knowledge'.[5]

But the line which interests us here passes through Fichte. Fichte's attempt to define subject–object identity is grounded on the view that agent's knowledge is the only genuine form of knowledge. Both Fichte and Schelling take up Kant's notion of an 'intellectual intuition', which for Kant was the kind of agent's knowledge which could only be attributed to God, one through which the existence of the object itself was given (B72), or one in which the manifold is given by the activity of the self (*selbsttätig*, B68). But they make this the basis of genuine self-knowledge by the ego; and then of all genuine knowledge in so far as object and subject are shown to be identical.

The category of agent's knowledge has obviously taken on a central role, has exploded beyond the limits that Kant set for it; and is, indeed, the principal instrument by which these limits are breached and the realm of inaccessible noumena denied. But the extension of agent's knowledge obviously goes along with a redefinition of the subject. He is no longer simply the finite subject in general that figures in the *Critiques*, but is related in some way to a single infinite or cosmic subject.

Hegel is obviously the heir to this development. He takes up the task of demonstrating subject–object identity, and believes himself alone to be capable of demonstrating this properly. What is first seen as 'other' is shown to be identical with the self. It is crucial to this demonstration that the self cease to understand itself as merely finite, but see itself as part of spirit.

But the recognition of identity takes the form of grasping that everything emanates from spirit's activity. To understand reality aright is to understand it as 'actuality' (translating *Wirklichkeit*), that is as what has been actualized. This is the crucial prerequisite of the final stage, which comes when we see that the agent of this activity is not foreign to us,

but that we are identical to (in our non-identity with) spirit. The highest categories of the Logic, those which provide the entry into the absolute Idea, are thus those linked with agency and activity. We move from teleology into the categories of life, and then from knowledge to the good.

The recognition thus requires that we understand reality as activity, but it requires as well that we come to understand in a fuller way what we are doing up to the point of seeing what spirit is doing through us. Coming to this point, we see the identity of the world-activity with ours.

Thought thus culminates in a form of agent's knowledge. But this is not just a department of what we know alongside observer's knowledge, as it is for our ordinary understanding. Rather observer's knowledge is ultimately superseded. But the distinction is none the less essential to the system, since its crucial claim is that we only rise to the higher kind of knowledge through a supersession of the lower kind.

And this higher knowledge is far from immediate. On the contrary, it is only possible as mediated through forms of expression, among which the only adequate medium is conceptual thought. And this brings us to another ramification of the qualitative view, which is also of central importance for Hegel. On the qualitative view, action may be totally unreflecting; it may be something we carry out without awareness. We may then become aware of what we are doing, formulate our ends. So following on a conscious desire or intention is not an inescapable feature of action. On the contrary, this degree of awareness in our action is something we come to achieve.

In achieving this, we also transform our activity. The quality of consciously directed activity is different from that of our unreflected, semi-conscious performance. This flows naturally from the second view on action: if action is qualitatively different from non-action, and this difference consists in the fact that action is directed, then action is also different when this direction takes on a crucially different character. And this it does when we move from unreflecting response, where we act in much the same manner as animals do, to conscious formulation of our purposes. Our action becomes directed in a different and stronger sense. To become conscious is to be able to act in a new way.

The causal theory does not allow for this kind of qualitative shift. Indeed in its original, dualist variant, it could not even allow for unreflecting action. Action is essentially caused by desire or intention, and on the original Cartesian-empiricist model our desires were essentially features of inner experience. To have a desire was to feel a desire. Hence, on this view, action was essentially preceded by a cause of which the agent was aware. This amounted in fact to making conscious action, where we are aware of our ends, the only kind of action. It left no place at all for totally unmonitored, unconscious activity, the kind of action animals engage in all the time, and we do much of the time.

And even when the causal theory is disengaged from its dualist or mentalist formulation, where the causes of action are seen as material, and hence quite conceivably largely unconscious, the theory still has no place for the notion that action is qualitatively transformed in becoming conscious. Awareness may allow us to intervene more effectively to control what comes about, but action remains essentially an undifferentiated external event with a certain kind of cause.

Now this offshoot of the qualitative view – that action is not essentially or originally conscious, that to make it so is an achievement, and that this achievement transforms it – is also crucial to the central doctrines of Hegel. I want to look at two of them here.

1

The first is what I have called elsewhere the 'principle of embodiment'.[6] This is the principle that the subject and all his functions, however 'spiritual' they may appear, are inescapably embodied. The embodiment is in two related dimensions: first, as a 'rational animal', that is as a living being who thinks; and second, as an expressive being, that is a being whose thinking is always and necessarily in a medium.

The basic notion here is that what passes in modern philosophy for the 'mental' is the inward reflection of what was originally external activity. Self-conscious understanding is the fruit of an interiorization of what was originally external. The seeming self-coincidence of thought where I am apparently immediately aware of my desires, aims and ideas, which is foundational to Cartesianism, is understood rather as an achievement, the overcoming of the externality of an unconscious, merely instinctive life. It is the fruit of a negation of what negates thought, not itself a positive datum. This understanding of conscious self-possession as the negation of the negation is grounded on the conception of action I have just been outlining. In effect, it involves seeing our mental life fundamentally in the category of action. If we think of the constituents of mental life, our desires, feelings, ideas, as merely given, as the objects which surround us in the world are given, then it is plausible to think of our knowledge of them as privileged. They appear to be objects which we cannot but be aware of, if we are aware at all. Our awareness of them is something basic, assured from the start, since it is essentially involved in our being aware at all.

In order to understand mental life as something we have to achieve understanding of, so that self-transparency is a goal we must work towards, we have to abandon the view of it as constituted of data. We have to understand it as action, on at least one of two levels, if not both.

On one level, we have to see self-perception as something we do, something we can bring off, or fail to bring off, rather than a feature of our basic predicament. This means that we see it as the fruit of an activity

of formulating how things are with us, what we desire, feel, think and so on. In this way, grasping what we desire or feel is something we can altogether fail to do, or do in a distorting or partial or censored fashion. If we think through the consequences of this, I believe we see that it requires that we conceive self-understanding as something that is brought off in a medium, through symbols or concepts, and formulating things in this medium as one of our fundamental activities.

We can see this if we leap out of the Hegelian context and look at the quite different case of Freud. Here we have the most notorious doctrine of the non-self-transparency of the human psyche. But this is mediated through a doctrine of self-understanding through symbols, and of our (more or less distorted and screened) formulation of our desires, fears and so on as something we do. For although these formulations occur without our wilful and conscious intent, they are nevertheless motivated. Displacements, condensations and so on occur where we are strongly motivated to bring them off.

But on a second level, we may also see the features of ourselves that self-perception grasps not as simply givens but as themselves bound up with activity. Thus desires, feelings may not be understood as just mental givens, but as the inner reflection of the life-process that we are. Our ideas may not be conceived as simple mental contents, but as the precipitates of thinking. And so on.

Hegel understands mental life as activity on both these levels. In a sense, the first can be thought to represent the influence of Kant. It was Kant who defended the principle that there is no perception of any kind which is not constituted by our conceptual activity. Thus there is no self-awareness, as there is no awareness of anything else, without the active contribution of the 'I think.' It was the contribution of the new richer theory of meaning that arose in the wake of Romanticism to see that this constitutive thought required an expressive medium. Freud is, of course, via Schopenhauer, the inheritor both of this Kantian doctrine and of the expressivist climate of thought, and hence also through Schopenhauer of the idea that our self-understanding can be very different in different media, as well as distorted in the interests of deeper impulses that we barely comprehend.

The making activity central on the second level is also the fruit of what I want to call the expressivist climate of thought, which refused the distinctions between mind and body, reason and instinct, intellect and feeling which earlier Enlightenment thought had made central. Thought and reason were to be understood as having their seat in the single life-process from which feeling also arose. Hence the new vogue for Aristotelian inseparability doctrines, of form and matter, of thought and expression, of soul and body.

Hegel's theory of mind is built on both these streams. Our self-

understanding is conceived as the inner self-reflection of a life-process, which at the outset fails to grasp what it is about. We learn through a painful and slow process to formulate ourselves less and less inadequately. At the beginning, desire is unreflected, and in that condition aims simply for the incorporation of the desired object. But this is inherently unsatisfactory, because the aims of spirit are to recognize the self in the other, and not simply to abolish otherness, And so we proceed to a higher form of desire, the desire for desire, the demand for recognition. This too starts off in a barely self-conscious form, which needs to be further transformed. And so on.

In this theory, activity is made central on both levels: (a) on the second, more fundamental level, what is to be understood here, the desire, is not seen as a mere psychic given, a datum of mental life. On the contrary, it is a reflection (and at first an inadequate one) of the goals of a life-process which is now embodied and in train in the world. Properly understood, this is the life-process of spirit, but we are at the outset far from seeing that. So the active life-process is primary, even in defining the object of knowledge.

Then (b) on the first level, the achievement of more and more adequate understandings is something that comes about through our activity of formulating. This takes place for Hegel, as we shall see later, not only in concepts and symbols, but also in common institutions and practices. For example, the institution of the master–slave relationship is one 'formulation' (and still an inadequate one) of the search for recognition. Grasping things through symbols, establishing and maintaining practices are things we do, are to be understood as activities, on Hegel's theory.

And so we have two related activities. There is a fundamental activity of spirit, which it tries to grasp through the various levels of self-formulation. These two mutually conditional activities are at first out of phase, but they are destined in the end to coincide perfectly. That is because it will become clear at the end that the end of the whole life-process was that spirit come to understand itself, and at the same time the life-process itself will be entirely transparent as an embodiment of this purpose.

But this perfect coincidence comes only at the end. And it only comes through the overcoming of non-coincidence, where what the pattern of activity is differs from what this pattern says. And so the distinction between these two dimensions is essential for the Hegelian philosophy: we could call them the effective and the expressive. Each life-form in history is both the effective realization of a certain pattern, and at the same time the expression of a certain self-understanding of man and hence also of spirit. The gap between these two is the historical contradiction which moves us on.

And so for Hegel, the principle of embodiment is central. What we focus on as the mental can only be understood in the first place as the

inner reflection of an embodied life-process; and this inner reflection is itself mediated by our formulations in an expressive medium. So all spiritual life is embodied in the two dimensions just described: it is the life of a living being who thinks; and his thinking is essentially expression. This double shift from Cartesianism, from a psychology of immediate self-transparency to one of achieved interiority, of the negation of the negation, is obviously grounded on the qualitative understanding of action, and the central role it plays here. The mental life has a depth which defies all immediate self-transparency, just because it is not merely self-contained, but is the reflection of a larger life-process; while plumbing this depth is in turn seen as something we do, as the fruit of the activity of self-formulation.

Once again, we shall see that the Hegelian understanding of things involves our seeing activity as all-pervasive. But the activity concerned is as it is conceived on the qualitative view.

2

We can thus see this offshoot of the qualitative view, which sees action as first unreflecting, and reflective understanding as an achievement, underpins what I call the principle of embodiment in Hegel's thought. But we saw above that for this conception reflective consciousness transforms action. And this aspect too is crucial to Hegel's theory.

His conception is of an activity which is at first uncertain or self-defeating because its purposes are barely understood. The search for recognition is, properly understood, a demand for reciprocal recognition, within the life of a community. This is what our activity is in fact groping towards, but at first we do not understand it in this way. In a still confused and inarticulated fashion, we identify the goal as attaining one-sided recognition for ourselves from others. It follows that our practice will be confused in its purpose and self-defeating. For the essential nature of the activity is not altered by our inadequate understanding of it; the true goal of the search for recognition remains community. Our inadequacy of understanding only means that our action itself is confused, and that means that its quality as directed activity is impaired.

We can see this kind of confusion, for instance, at the stage where we seek to answer our need for recognition through an institution like that of slavery. We are already involved here with what will turn out to be the only possible solution to this quest, viz. community; because even the institution of the master–slave relation will typically be defined and mediated by law, a law which binds all parties, and which implicitly recognizes them as subjects of right. Within this framework, the relations of domination, of ownership of man by man, contradict the basic nature of law. If we think of our building and maintaining these institutions as an activity we are engaged in together, which is how Hegel sees it, then

we can see that our activity itself is confused and contradictory. This is, indeed, why it will be self-defeating, and why this institutional complex will eventually undermine and destroy itself.

A new form of society will then arise out of the ruins of this one. But the practices of this new society will only be higher than previous ones to the extent that we have learned from the previous error, and now have a more satisfactory understanding of what we are engaged in. Indeed, it is only possible to accede eventually to a practice which has fully overcome confusion and is no longer self-defeating if we finally come to an understanding which is fully adequate.

But throughout this whole development we can see the close relation which exists between the level of our understanding and the quality of our practice. On this view, our action itself can be more or less firmly guided, more or less coherent and self-consistent. And its being one or the other is related to the level of our self-understanding.

We are reminded here of a common conception of the Romantics, well expressed in a story of Kleist, that fully coherent action must either be totally unreflecting or the fruit of full understanding. The birth of self-consciousness on this view disrupts our activity, and we can only compensate for this disruption by a self-awareness which is total. Hegel takes up this conception with an important difference. The crucial activity is that of spirit, and it aims for self-recognition. As a consequence, there is no such thing as the perfection of totally unreflecting activity. The earliest phases of human life are even then phases of spirit, and the contradiction is present between their unconsciousness and what they implicitly seek.

In sum, we can see that this ramification of the qualitative theory of action involves a basic reversal in the order of explanation from the philosophy that Cartesianism and empiricism bequeathed to us. It amounts to another one of those shifts in what is taken as primitive in explanation, similar and related to the one we mentioned at the outset.

There I pointed out that for the Cartesian–empiricist view, action was something to be further explained, compounded out of undifferentiated events and a certain kind of cause. The cause here was a desire, or intention, a 'mental' event; and these mental occurrences are taken as primitives by this kind of theory, and part of the explanatory background of action.

But the qualitative view turns out to reverse this order. The 'mental' is not a primitive datum, but is rather something achieved. Moreover, we explain its genesis from action, as the reflective understanding we eventually attain of what we are doing. So the status of primitive and derived in explanation is reversed. One theory explains action in terms of the supposedly more basic datum of the mental; the other accounts for the mental as a development out of our primitive capacity for action.

III

The qualitative view also brings about another reversal, this time in the theory of meaning, which it is worth examining for its own sake, as well as for its importance to Hegel.

I said above that for this view becoming aware of ourselves, coming to self-consciousness, is something we do. We come to be able to formulate properly what we are about. But this notion of formulation refers us to that of an expressive medium.

One way to trace the connection is this: if we think of self-consciousness as the fruit of action, and we think of action as first of all unreflecting bodily practice, which only later comes to be self-understood; then the activity of formulating must itself conform to this model. That is, our formulating ourselves would be at first a relatively unreflective bodily practice, and would attain only later to the self-clarity required for full self-consciousness.

But this is just what we see in the new expressive theories of meaning which arose in the later eighteenth century, and which Hegel took over. First, the very notion of expression is that of self-revelation as a special kind of bodily practice. The Enlightenment theory of signs, born of the epistemological theories of the seventeenth century, made no fundamental distinction between expressive and any other form of self-revelation. You can see that I am afraid of a recession by the fact that I am selling short; you can see that I am afraid of you by the expression on my face; you can see that it is going to rain because the barometer is falling. Each of these was seen as a 'sign' which points beyond to something it designates or reveals. Enlightenment theorists marked distinctions between signs: some were by nature, some by convention. For Condillac, there were three kinds, accidental signs, natural signs and signs by institution.

But the distinction they quite overlooked was the crucial one for an expressivist, that between 'signs' which allow you to infer to their 'designatum', as the barometer does to rain, and true signs which express something. When we make something plain in expression, we reveal it in public space in a way which has no parallel in cases of inference. The barometer 'reveals' rain indirectly. This contrasts with our perceiving rain directly. But when I make plain my anger or my joy, in facial or verbal expression, there is no such contrast. This is not a second best, the dropping of clues which enable you to infer. This is what manifesting anger or joy *is*. They are made evident not by or through the expression but in it.

The new theories of meaning, which start perhaps with Herder's critique of Condillac, involve a fundamental shift. They recognize the special nature of those human activities which reveal things in this special way. Let us call them expressive activities. These are bodily activities. They

involve using signs, gestures, spoken or written words. And moreover, their first uses are relatively unreflecting. They aim to make plain in public space how we feel, or how we stand with each other, or where things stand for us. It is a long slow process which makes us able to get things in clearer focus, describe them more exactly, and above all, become more knowledgeable about ourselves.

To do this requires that we develop finer and more discriminating media. We can speak of an embodiment which reveals in this expressive way as a 'medium'. Then the struggle for deeper and more accurate reflective self-understanding can be understood as the attempt to discover or coin more adequate media. Facial expressions do much to make us present to each other in our feelings and desires, but for self-understanding we need a refined and subtle vocabulary.

This amounts to another major reversal in theory. The Enlightenment account explained meaning in terms of the link of designation or 'signifying' between word and object. This was a link set up in thought. In Locke's theory, it was even seen as a link set up through thought, since the word strictly speaking signified the idea of the object. Meaning is explained here by thought, which once again is seen in the role of explanatory primitive. In this conception, expression is just one case of the signifying relation, which is seen as constituted in thought.

But for the expressive theory, it is expression which is the primitive. Thought, that is the clear, explicit kind of thought we need to establish new coinages, new relations of 'signifying', is itself explained from expression. Both ontogenetically and in the history of culture, our first expressions are in public space, and are the vehicles of a quite unreflective awareness. Later we both develop more refined media, in concepts and images, and become more and more capable of carrying out some part of our expressive activity monologically; that is we become capable of formulating some things just for ourselves, and hence of thinking privately. We then develop the capacity to frame some things clearly to ourselves, and thus even to coin new expressions for our own use. But this capacity, which the Enlightenment theory takes as a primitive, is seen here as a late achievement, a change we ultimately come to be able to ring on our expressive capacity. This latter is what is now seen as basic in the order of explanation.

In our day, a similar radical reversal was carried out in theory of meaning by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who took as his target the theory which emerges out of modern epistemological theory, to which he himself had partly subscribed earlier. What I have called the Herderian theory is very reminiscent therefore of Wittgenstein's.

But Hegel wrote in the wake of the earlier expressive revolution. And one can see its importance for his thought by the crucial place in it of what I have called the notion of medium. The goal of spirit is clear, self-

conscious understanding. But the struggle to attain this is just the struggle to formulate it in an adequate medium.

Thus Hegel distinguishes art, religion and philosophy as media, in ascending order of adequacy. The perception of the absolute is embodied in the work of art, it is presented there (*dargestellt*). But this is in a form which is still relatively inarticulate and unreflecting. Religious doctrine and cult bring us closer to adequacy, but are still clouded by images and 'representations' (*Vorstellungen*). The only fully adequate form is conceptual thought, which allows both transparency and full reflective awareness. But attaining our formulation in this medium is the result of a long struggle. It is an achievement; and one which builds on and requires the formulation in the other, less adequate media. Philosophy does not only build on its own past. For in earlier ages, the truth is more adequately presented in religion (for example the early ages of Christianity) or art-religion (at the height of the Greek polis). In coming to its adequate form, philosophy as it were catches up. True speculative philosophy has to say clearly what has been there already in the images of Christian theology.

Thus for Hegel too thought is the achievement whereby our expression is made more inward and clear. The attainment of self-understanding is the fruit of an activity which itself conforms to the basic model of action, that it is at first unreflecting bodily practice and only later attains self-clarity. This is the activity of expressing.

IV

I have been looking at how the qualitative theory of action and its ramifications underlie Hegel's philosophy of mind, for which in the end everything is to be understood in terms of the all-pervasive activity of spirit. I have been arguing that we can only understand the kind of activity involved here if we have in mind the qualitative view.

But there are also some important features of human historical action on Hegel's view which only make sense against this conception. I want to mention two here.

1

The first is this: all action is not in the last analysis of individuals; there are irreducibly collective actions. The causal view was inherently atomist. An action was such because it was caused by desire, intention, some 'mental' state. But these mental states could only be understood as states of individuals. The mental is what is 'inner', which means within each one of us. And so action is ultimately individual. That is to say, collective actions ultimately amount to the convergent action of many individuals

and nothing more. To say 'the X church did so-and-so' or 'the Y party did such-and-such' must amount to attributing converging action to clumps of individuals in each case. For what makes these events actions in each case is their having inner mental causes, and these have to occur or not occur discreetly within individuals.

By contrast, the qualitative view does not tie action only to the individual agent. The nature of the agency come clear to us only when we have a clear understanding of the nature of the action. This can be individual; but it can also be the action of a community, and in a fashion which is irreducible to individual action. It can even conceivably be the action of an agent who is not simply identical with human agency.

Hegel, of course, avails himself of both of these latter possibilities. In his conception of public life, as it exists in a properly established system of objective ethics (*Sittlichkeit*), the common practices or institutions which embody this life are seen as our doing. But they constitute an activity which is genuinely common to us; it is *ours* in a sense which cannot be analysed into a convergence of *mine*s.

But for Hegel, there is a crucial level of activity which is not only more than individual, but even more than merely human. Some of what we do we can understand also and more deeply as the action of spirit through us. In order to arrive at a proper understanding, we thus have to transcend our ordinary self-understanding; and to the extent that our common sense is atomist, we have to make two big transpositions: in the first, we come to see that some of our actions are those of communities; in the second, we see that some are the work of spirit. It is in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that we see these transitions being made. The first corresponds to the step from chapter V to chapter VI (here Hegel speaks of the community action by using the term 'spirit'). The second is made as we move through the discussion in the third part of chapter VI into the chapter on Religion.

2

Following what I have said in earlier sections, human action is to be understood in two dimensions, the effective and the expressive. This latter dimension makes it even clearer how action is not necessarily that of the individual. An expression in public space may turn out to be the expression essentially of a common sentiment or purpose. That is, it may be essential to this sentiment or purpose that it be shared, and the expression may be the vehicle of this sharing.

These two features together – that action can be that of a community, and that it also exists in the expressive dimension – form the crucial background to Hegel's philosophy of society and history. The *Sittlichkeit* of a given society is not only to be seen as the action of a community, or of individuals only so far as they identify themselves as members of

a community (an 'I' that is 'We', and a 'We' that is 'I');[7] it also embodies and gives expression to a certain understanding of the agent, his community and their relation to the divine. It is this latter which gives us the key to the fate of the society. For it is here that the basic incoherence underlying social practice will appear as contradiction, as we saw with the case of the slave-owning society above. Hegel's notion of historical development can only be properly stated if we understand social institutions in this way, as trans-individual action which also has an expressive dimension. By contrast, the causal view and its accompanying atomist outlook induce us to explain institutions in purely instrumental terms. And in these terms, Hegel's theory becomes completely unformulable. We cannot even begin to state what it is all about.[8]

V

I have been arguing that we can understand Hegel against the background of a long-standing and very basic issue in modern philosophy about the nature of action. Hegel's philosophy of mind can be understood as firmly grounded on an option in favour of what I have been calling the qualitative view of action and against the causal view.

I have tried to follow the different ramifications of this qualitative view to show their importance to Hegel's thought. I looked first at the notion of agent's knowledge, and we saw that the system of philosophy itself can be seen as the integration of everything into a form of all-embracing agent's knowlege. I then followed another development of the qualitative view, which shows us action as primordially unreflecting bodily practice, which later can be transformed by the agent's achievement of reflective awareness. We saw that Hegel's conceptions of subjectivity and its development are rooted in this understanding. I then argued that the expressive revolution in the theory of meaning could be seen as an offshoot of this same view of action; and that Hegel is clearly operating within the expressive conception. Finally we can see that his theory of history supposes not just the expressive dimension but also the idea of irreducibly common actions, which only the qualitative view can allow.

One part of my case is thus that Hegel's philosophy of mind can be illuminated by making this issue explicit in all its ramifications. This is just in the way that we make any philosophy clearer by spelling out more fully some of its deepest assumptions. The illumination will be the greater the more fundamental and pervasive the assumptions in question are from the theory under study. Now my claim is that for Hegel the qualitative theory of action is very basic and all-pervasive, and the above pages have attempted to show this. Perhaps out of deference to Hegel's shade I should not use the word 'assumption', since for Hegel everything is

ultimately demonstrated. But my claim stands that the thesis about action I have been describing here is quite central to his philosophy.

This is only one side of the gain that one can hope for in a study of this kind. The other, as I said at the outset, is that we should attain some greater understanding of the historical debate itself by situating Hegel in it. I think this is so as well, but I have not got space to argue it here.

What does emerge from the above is that Hegel is one of the important and seminal figures in the long and hard-fought emergence of a counter-theory to the long dominant epistemologically based view which the seventeenth century bequeathed to us. This can help explain why he has been an influential figure in this whole counter-movement. But what remains to be understood is why he has also often been ignored or rejected by major figures who have shared somewhat the same notions of action, starting with Schopenhauer but by no means ending there.

Perhaps what separates Hegel most obviously and most profoundly from those today who take the same side on the issue about action is their profoundly different reading of the same genetic view. For Heidegger, for example, the notion that action is first of all unreflected practice seems to rule out altogether as chimerical the goal of a fully explicit and self-authenticating understanding of what we are about. Disclosure is invariably accompanied by hiddenness; the explicit depends on the horizon of the implicit. The difference here is fundamental, but I believe that it too can be illuminated if we relate to it radically different readings of the qualitative view of action, which both espoused in opposition to the epistemological rationalism of the seventeenth century.

Notes

1 D. Davidson, 'Actions, reasons and causes', *Journal of Philosophy*, 60:23 (1973), pp. 685–700, and 'Freedom to act', in Ted Honderich (ed.), *Essays on Freedom of Action* (London, 1973).

2 C. Taylor, 'Action as expression', in C. Diamond and J. Teichman (eds), *Intention and Intentionality* (London, 1979).

3 B. Williams, *Descartes* (London, 1978).

4 I have argued this further in C. Taylor, 'The validity of transcendental arguments', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1978–9), pp. 151–65.

5 G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 13–15.

6 C. Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 18.

7 *Philosophy of Spirit* 140.

8 I have developed this further in C. Taylor, 'Hegel's "Sittlichkeit" and the crisis of representative institutions', in Yirmiahu Yovel (ed.), *Philosophy of History and Action* (London and Jerusalem, 1978).

Hegel's triadic doctrine of cognitive mind[1]

Murray Greene

Midway in the process of inquiring about what it means 'to know', Socrates is stopped short by a thought that seems to render the whole undertaking questionable.

> Is it not shameless to proclaim what it is to know (*epistasthai*) when we are ignorant of knowledge (*episteme*)?[2]

How can we tell what our knowing activity properly consists in, Socrates seems to be objecting, until we can say what is knowledge as such? In the Platonic context, where knowledge is knowledge of the Forms – eternal and independent of our knowing – the objection appears unanswerable. But outside the Platonic context, are we not entitled to put to Socrates the opposite objection? Would it not be just as 'shameless' to proclaim what is knowledge before we can say how we come to know it to be such?

In contrast to Socrates, who implied that we must first have knowledge before we can say what it is to know, the main moderns from Locke to Kant held more or less explicitly that we must first examine our faculty of cognition before we can say what knowledge is. This approach would of course be open to the Socratic objection: but how do we know our putative knowing is a knowledge? In this vein Hegel, as is well known, charged the Kantian approach with requiring a knowing before we know, a learning to swim before entering the water.[3] But Hegel did not mean to go back to the Socratic demand in its one-sidedness. Both the Socratic and the Kantian demands had their rights. The main point for Hegel is that they cannot be satisfied in isolation, or by taking one before the other. The demand to say what is knowledge and what is knowing can be met only in one process of inquiry wherein the knower as knowing

and the truth as known are seen to develop as dialectical opposites that ultimately converge.

Part of Hegel's attempt to demonstrate this process is contained in his doctrine of Subjective Mind (spirit), forming a section of his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*.[4] The text containing the doctrine of Subjective Mind is now available in a new English edition which includes the hitherto untranslated 'additions' (*Zusätze*) from Hegel's lectures.[5]

Thus far in English-speaking Hegel studies, it seems to me, there has been relatively little that helps toward a close understanding of the Hegelian text concerning Subjective Mind. This text embodies the main Hegelian statement regarding 'cognitive mind' and hence is central to Hegel's position generally. Yet there appears to be not even a clear understanding of the order and relation of the three sciences of Subjective Mind: anthropology, phenomenology and psychology.[6] To be sure, it is readily seen that each of the sciences presents a stage in spirit's liberation struggle (*Befreiungskampf*): from its sunkenness in nature as 'soul', to its emergence as objective 'consciousness', and finally to its attainment of free self-possession as spirit or 'mind proper'. What is not so easily seen, however, is that the three sciences that study this development have certain assigned tasks, as it were. They form a particular logical order that purportedly resolves the problem of cognition as this problem took form in the post-Cartesian concept of the subjective consciousness.

In the present paper I shall try to elucidate as far as I can the rationale of Hegel's triadic organization of the sciences of Subjective Mind. Why the succession: anthropology, phenomenology, psychology?[7] It is no arbitrary one but meant, as we shall see, to form a necessary progression. What is the nature and source of this necessity, and what does it accomplish? We may say in brief that it is designed to reconcile subjective certainty (*Gewissheit*) and truth (*Wahrheit*). The approach of Hegel's triadic doctrine of Subjective Mind, I believe, may be viewed as an effort to combine in one process the demands – inevitably one-sided taken in separation – for *epistasthai* and *episteme*. This will emerge most clearly, in my opinion, if we bring to mind in our study of the text certain main Hegelian criticisms of Kant, developed in part elsewhere:

1 Kant picked up the categories from formal logic instead of deducing them in a 'genuinely synthetic progress' of the ego as Notion.[8]
2 Ego is no 'transcendental *x*' which must make 'use' of itself in judgment; ego *is* judgment (*Ur-teil*).[9]
3 Thing-in-itself is only for 'consciousness', which is mind in its 'appearance', not its ultimate truth.
4 Sensibility and understanding are not 'two stems' of knowledge but moments of mind in its totality.[10]

5 Hence there is no dualism of matter and form whereby the categories are in themselves but 'empty forms'.
6 Kantian analysis is a formalism that abstracts from mind as a spiritual life.

Following the present introductory section, our presentation will consist in three parts corresponding with Hegel's three sciences of Subjective Mind. Since our main aim is to elucidate the meaning of the triadic organization, we shall offer only a skeletal treatment of content and stress considerations of general purport and method in the three sciences, both in their interconnection and in their totality as comprising the doctrine of Subjective Mind.

I

Anthropology, the first of the three sciences of Subjective Mind, deals with the natural foundation of man. The soul is mind as first arising out of its immersion in nature, mind in its 'darkness' and its 'slumber'. For the physical subjectivity there is as yet no distinction of self and other. The latter comes to the soul as but the dark side of the soul itself, its own universal corporeal being. The demonstration in the anthropology purports to show how the soul comes to power as ideality of its corporeality (*Leiblichkeit*), infuses the latter with the soul's own spiritual light and 'releases' it to become an objective outer world standing opposite the self, which has now become ego of consciousness.

In the Philosophy of Nature, which precedes anthropology, nature has purportedly been shown to sublate itself to mind as its truth.[11] In the sentient animal soul, which feels itself as one at every point in its body, and in the sublation of the transient animal singularity in the abiding universality of the genus, nature has overpassed itself as a realm of the *partes extra partes*.[12] The individual soul as 'mind' falls heir to the entire development of nature. The doctrine of Subjective Mind thus begins with the 'natural soul' as implicit ideality of its physical nature as its universal substantial being.

As ideality of its body, the soul is the 'microcosm' in which the 'macrocosm' of universal nature is concentrated and sublated in its spatial and temporal asunderness.[13] My body, says Hegel, is the 'middle term' (*Mitte*) whereby I 'come together with the external world as such'.[14] Hegel seeks to show this in his treatment of the 'sensible soul' (*die empfindende Seele*), where the five senses are presented as a system of specified 'bodiness' (*Körperlichkeit*) constituting the ideality of outer body in the essential moments of its notion.[15]

Sublating the transient and singular content of sensation within the

'unconscious pit' of the psyche, the soul raises itself to 'feeling soul' (*die fühlende Seele*). On this level the psychical subjectivity obtains a feeling of itself as totality, the manifold of its feeling-life coming to it in the form of dream and presentiment. Here Hegel deals with a realm that later came to be explored by depth psychology.[16] As identity of its manifold in the 'immediate' form of feeling, the psychical subjectivity is a self-enclosed 'monad'. The manifold of its feeling-life does not come to the soul as determinations of an objective outer world. Yet, Hegel seeks to prove, the monadic subjectivity of feeling is in an important way a prefiguration of the ego of consciousness. The soul's relation to the manifold of its feeling-life, says Hegel, has the form of a 'judgment' or 'original self-dividing' (*Ur-teil*) in which the soul is 'always subject; its object is its substance, which is at the same time its predicate'.[17] This logical relation will later emerge once again in another decisive *Ur-teil*, that which establishes the subject–object relation on the level of consciousness.

The 'immediate' knowing of the physical subjectivity is seen by Hegel in the particular 'genius' within each man, his 'more intensive individuality' as the 'nucleus' in which his whole mental life is 'condensed' and which retains in its 'enveloping simplicity' all further ties and essential relationships on the level of consciousness.[18] This knowing is a knowing that is not yet structured according to the objective categories of consciousness, such as cause and effect. Hegel points to forms of trance-like 'gazing-knowing' (*schauendes Wissen*) and to 'animal magnetism'. The latter is viewed by Hegel with special interest as a kind of physical unity (*Seeleneinheit*) wherein the dominating subjectivity 'vibrates' (*durchzittert*) the weaker as its 'non-independent predicate'. In the mother–foetus relationship, in the relation of parents to child, and in some morbid relations between adults which are akin to the hypnotist–patient relation, according to Hegel, we witness situations where the stronger subjectivity infuses the weaker as its passive vessel, just as in the monadic subjectivity's relation to its natural being, which it permeates as its substance and non-independent predicate. Hypnosis ('animal magnetism') is viewed by Hegel as a form of collapse or regression (*Herabsinken*) on the part of the patient from the active waking consciousness to the passive feeling-self, which lies open to the control of the hypnotist.

A somewhat different form of *Herabsinken* is manifested in psychosis, which is seen by Hegel as a regressive or arrested form of 'self-feeling' (*Selbstgefuhl*). Here the subjectivity has in part lapsed back to the feeling-life and invested its whole being in a particular content of self-feeling which takes on the obdurateness of a 'fixed idea'. Psychosis is thus a sundering of the selfhood, a 'blockage' (*Hemmung*), at once physical and mental, within the subjectivity in its fluid totality or universality.[19]

The soul sublates the particular determinations in which it has been

'sunk' in self-feeling, and returns to itself in its universality in 'habit'. In this winning release from its immediate bodily affections in their particularity, the psychical subjectivity frees itself for occupation with other things. Reducing the body to an 'instrument' of its 'subjective purpose', the soul has raised itself to 'subjective substance', which is the 'basis' of consciousness.[20]

The soul 'actualizes' itself as ideality by so informing its body with its subjective inwardness as to render the body the soul's own outer 'sign' (*Zeichen*).[21] In stance and attitude, in gesture, demeanour, and mobile play of features, the soul has fashioned the body to its own 'work of art'. The body stands not for itself but as *Dasein* of the soul, the externality wherein the spiritual inner 'feels itself and makes itself felt'. Having thereby attained to its being-for-self in its corporeal being, the subjectivity – by virtue of its inherent nature as mind – separates itself from this its immediate *Sein*, sets itself opposite the latter which it has sublated and determined to its own.

This 'opposing' (*Gegenüberstellen*) of its psychical content by the subjectivity, according to Hegel, is the 'awakening' of the soul to consciousness. The subjectivity is no longer 'sunk' in its physical nature as it was on the level of monadic feeling; it is no longer 'caught fast' or 'blocked' in its particular determinations of self-feeling. It has attained to 'ego', which is the 'abstract universality insofar as it is *for* the abstract universality'.[22] The soul's awakening to consciousness is again an *Urteil*. The ego of consciousness, like the monadic subjectivity, is subject of the 'judgment' – but unlike the *Urteil* on the monadic level, where the subjectivity was in 'immediate' relation with its substantial being as its feeling-life, the soul in attaining to ego has excluded its formerly monadic content from itself and endowed it with the form of self-subsistent objectivity.[23] Now, on the level of consciousness, the subjectivity is related 'mediately' to its content by means of objective thought-determinations or 'categories'.

Thus where modern *Erkenntnistheorie* from Descartes to Kant began on the level of consciousness,[24] Hegel has purportedly demonstrated consciousness as a 'result'. What is the significance of this demonstration for a doctrine of cognition?

In Hegel's view, modern *Erkenntnistheorie* beginning with Descartes was largely vitiated by its inability to demonstrate the necessary forms of objective thought as necessary forms of the thinking consciousness.[25] Looking within consciousness in uncritical and often 'merely psychological' fashion, cognition theory took as its mark of objectivity such determinations of the subjective consciousness as 'clear and distinct ideas'.[26] In this approach to the 'certainty' of knowledge the logical problem of objectivity was often conflated with the problem of the grounds of subjectivity 'assent'. Kant made possible a logical doctrine of objectivity by his

synthetic unity of apperception. 'Objective judgment', for Kant, 'is nothing but the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception. This is what is intended by the copula "is".'[27] Hereby objective judgment is taken as a universal logical function of ego, and the problem of certainty is no longer one of mere 'assent'. But in Hegel's view, Kant did not demonstrate the forms of judgment as deriving out of the ego in its inherent nature as Notion. Since with Kant even 'objective' judgment is in a sense also 'merely' subjective,[28] we still do not extricate ourselves from the problem of *epistasthai* and *episteme*.

Hegel attacks Kant's 'merely subjective' exposition of the Notion on many counts.[29] For Hegel, speculative logic demonstrates that the 'copula "is" springs from the nature of the Notion, to be self-identical even in parting with its own'.[30] This *Urteil* of the Notion as such is demonstrated in the science of logic. In the sciences of subjective mind, however, we demonstrate that the *Urteil* of Notion is also the *Urteil* of subjectivity, the very division within self which marks the soul's attainment to the level of objective consciousness.

Through the demonstration of the emergence of consciousness as an *Urteil*, the opposition of the two sides in the subject–object relation is known by the philosopher to be grounded in their implicit identity. This identity – of substance and subject – has been shown to have the form of the body-soul relationship on the anthropological level. In this realm of 'natural mind', the body has been 'object', the soul 'subject'; the body the 'in itself', the soul the 'for itself'. Permeating the body as the 'outer' of its own self as 'inner', the subjectivity has raised itself to 'single subject; and the corporeity is an externality which stands as a predicate, in being related to which, it is related to itself'.[31] This is the moment of the soul's 'actualization': it is at the same time an act of self-dividing which awakens the soul to ego and renders its content objective. In fulfilment of his critique of the Kantian ego as an unknowable transcendental x, Hegel claims to have shown in the anthropology how the ego first emerges as

> subject of the judgment in which the ego excludes from itself the sum total of its merely natural features as an object, a world external to it – but with such respect to that object that in it it is immediately reflected into itself. Thus soul rises to *Consciousness*.[32]

That ego and object are from birth dialectical opposites makes possible the fulfilment of an important demand which Hegel claims the Kantian notion of the identity of self-consciousness was not able to meet. This demand is for a 'genuinely synthetic progress – the self-producing Notion'. In such a demonstration the categories will not appear as something the ego 'makes use' of in judging.[33] Rather, by virtue of the demonstration

of the emergence of the external world through the subject's own act of self-dividing, the categories will be forms of consciousness and *eo ipso* forms of 'world' in which consciousness first actualizes itself in its living reality. The categories need not now be picked up 'from formal logic as given'. They are to be taken as forms of consciousness as a concrete spiritual life. The forms of this spiritual life are dealt with in the science of phenomenology, which, in the way we have seen, derives its principle from the original self-dividing (*Ur-teil*) of the psychical subjectivity as shown in the anthropology.

II

Phenomenology, according to Hegel, is the science of consciousness that makes possible science's liberation from consciousness. In dealing with the subject–object relation of consciousness, phenomenology has as its problem the separation of *epistasthai* and *episteme*, subjective 'certainty' and objective 'truth'. But the implicit identity of subject and object already shown in the anthropology makes possible a resolution of the problem. The science of phenomenology will not proceed like other approaches to cognition through consciousness. The problem of 'certainty' in phenomenology will not mean the problem of the subjective knower's 'assent'. By virtue of the notion of consciousness yielded in the anthropology, the question of 'certainty' in the science of phenomenology becomes that of the logical determinations implicit in the singular subjectivity's claim to a knowledge of the object as an 'in itself'. The question of 'truth' becomes the question of the inherent ground of the subjectivity's successive claims – a ground consisting in the nature of the singular subjectivity as implicitly identical with its substance, i.e. as implicitly universal reason and Notion.

The emergence of ego from the soul's self-dividing provides the notion of the subject–object relation on the level of consciousness. Ego is 'one side of the relationship and the whole relationship – the light, which manifests itself and something else too'.[34] Like the categories of Essence in the science of logic, each of the two sides of the subject–object relation is mediated by the other, reflects into itself in its other. In contrast to the monadic psychical subjectivity, the ego knows itself as an 'I' and distinguishes its content as a negative of itself, a 'not-I'. For this reason, says Hegel, consciousness, 'like relation in general', is the contradiction of the independence of both sides and their implicit identity. On the one hand my knowledge of the external world is 'in' me as my knowing and essential to my certainty of self; on the other hand the object has independent subsistence, is indifferent to me. As long as the externality which I claim to know and with which I intimately dwell remains an 'in-itself',

my own certainty of self is rendered 'only a show'.[35] But the 'aim' of mind as consciousness is 'to make its appearance identical with its essence, to raise its self-certainty to truth'.[36]

In contrast to anthropology, which deals with mind as 'immediate' self-relation of subjectivity and substance, phenomenology views mind as 'for itself' but mediated through 'its relation to its other' and 'exhibiting itself in its opposite'. Precisely in this relation to other, mind 'manifests' itself, explicates its former implicitness as soul. From its erstwhile darkness and slumber, mind has awakened to objective consciousness, opened itself to the light. The denizen of the cave has ascended to the daylight, sees the sun as a light from without and does not yet know that it is in truth his own. The movement of consciousness, as everywhere in spirit, is to be 'for itself' what it is 'in itself'. Thus, Hegel says, consciousness has for its object 'the stage which preceded it, viz. the natural soul',[37] but it does not yet know that object as itself.

As initially arising out of the *Urteil* of the soul, ego is in the first instance but a formal and indeterminate self-distinguishing, a mere repelling of itself from itself. All distinction appears to come from the side of the object, and the task of tracing the object's progressive logical determination falls on us, the philosophers. In this respect there is a similarity with the situation in the anthropology, where the philosopher had to point out the ways of the soul's being-for-itself in its feeling-life. In phenomenology, however, the cognitive situation is different. Since the ego of consciousness, unlike the soul, can say 'I', it distinguishes itself in its knowing from the 'not-I' as an 'other'. At the same time the ego relates itself to its other by an explicit claim to a knowledge of the latter and in its endeavour to appropriate it to itself through practical activity. It is in terms of such claims on the part of the subject itself that the phenomenological demonstration proceeds – claims regarding the subject's 'certainty' of the object and put forward as logical determinations of the latter. Hence every advance in the logical determination of the object, though seeming to come from the side of the latter as it is 'in itself', is at the same time a progressive determination and inwardization of the subject.[38] Before we note the main steps in the demonstration, let us see what it is meant to accomplish.

Hegel tells us that he overcomes Kant's 'merely subjective' exposition of the Notion along two main avenues: the science of logic and the concrete sciences of cognition.[39] In his speculative logic, Hegel claims, he has shown the emergence of Notion from Being and Essence, whose categories include those of the traditional metaphysics as well as Kantian transcendentalism.[40] Hegel has purportedly gone beyond these categories by showing that the 'relation of substantiality' has passed into the 'subjectivity' of Notion as its 'foundation and truth'.[41] Hereby the categories of 'obectivity' and 'necessity' prove to have their ground in 'subjectivity'

and 'freedom'. The residue of a *Ding-an-sich* in the Kantian phenomenal uniting of *epistasthai* and *episteme* has been overcome in the strictly logical realm.

In the second main avenue, Hegel has to show the Notion as emerging in concrete mind – i.e. in the sciences of cognition. Here the task is to overcome the Kantian limitation of understanding to sensuous experience, to show that the categories are not empty forms and that sensibility and understanding are not separate 'stems'. Further, if Hegel is to back up his charge of 'formalism' against Kant, he has to show subjectivity as a concrete spiritual life in whose self-generation arise those very categories that Kant took 'from formal logic as given', and that these categories pass over from objectivity and external necessity to subjectivity and freedom – just as they did in the science of logic. It devolves upon the science of phenomenology to accomplish all of these essential tasks. Bearing in mind this 'programme', we shall note in brief outline the main features of the phenomenological demonstration.

The movement of consciousness proceeds from 'sense certainty' through 'perception' to supersensuous 'understanding'. Simultaneously with this progressive inwardization on the side of the subject, the object transforms itself from the contingent self-external singularity to the inner self-distinguishing universality that marks its passage beyond mere objectivity as such. From the sensuous consciousness' immediate certainty of the 'being' of the sensuous 'this', the movement advances to the perceiving consciousness' certainty of the sense-conditioned universal as 'thing' of many 'properties' and 'matters'. Out of the contradictions of this one-in-many arises the understanding's unconditioned universal as 'force', determined as both 'inner' and 'outer', substance and accident, cause and effect, phenomenal flux and supersensuous 'law'. Finally in 'life', where the object has inwardized itself to the self-distinguishing of Notion, inner purposefulness has proved to be the truth of external necessity. As inwardly self-differentiating, 'object' has been shown to be identical with the inwardness of 'subject', and consciousness of other to be at the same time consciousness of self.

The singular self-consciousness moves to 'verify' its certainty of self as truth of its 'other' – initially in the satisfaction of desire through consumption of the other as a self-external physical nature. In 'struggle for recogniton' by another self-consciousness, and in formative labour that achieves cooperative independence of physical externality and establishes the bonds of community, self-consciousness sublates its one-sidedness as particularity. In the 'we' self-consciousness of polity, other, like self-consciousness itself, becomes known to the latter as a being-for-self – as permeated by the subjectivity of Notion. Hereby subjectivity has attained its truth as universal self-consciousness. It is the absolutely free reason that knows 'its object is the Notion and the Notion is objective'.[42] It is

in this way, the demonstration claims, that subjectivity has raised its 'certainty' to 'truth', and objectivity has been sublated as thing-in-itself external and opposed to subjectivity.

Our bare outline of the phenomenological movement is meant only to serve as a locus of reference for understanding the role of this second science of Subjective Mind. If the demonstration is to be accepted as successful, then several important tasks have been accomplished in Hegel's effort to go beyond Kant. In the first place it may be seen that we are beyond a doctrine of the 'two stems'. By virtue of the previous demonstration in the anthropology, the sensuous consciousness itself is, to begin with, more than a Kantian faculty of 'sensibility'. It is already a 'thinking' consciousness as having emerged from the soul. In its very act of positing its content as an outer world – the *Ur-teil* that marked the birth of ego – the subject has already structured its content in universal, objective thought determinations: thus it 'is aware of the object as an existent (*Seienden*), a something, an existing thing, a singular, and so on'.[43] These are already 'categories', albeit of the rudest kind. Further, in the advancing movement from the sensuous consciousness to the supersensuous understanding, the sense-conditioned universals of the former are sublated in the higher categories of the latter, such as 'law', which thereby prove to be no 'empty forms' but the very ground and truth of sensuousness. Further, as arising immanently out of the movement of consciousness in its notion, the objective categories are demonstrated in a 'genuinely synthetic progress'. Finally this 'progress' is shown by no mere external reflection on the part of the philosopher but as arising out of consciousness' own struggles for enlightenment – claims to knowledge which are recognizable as decisive turns in the history of thought and, particularly in the realm of self-consciousness, as moments of a developing spiritual life in concrete lived experience, labour, social conflict and cooperative endeavour. It is this living concreteness of the phenomenology that impressed itself so strongly on later generations of thinkers.

With the overcoming of the subject–object opposition in consciousness, phenomenology as the science of mind in its 'appearing' concludes. Consciousness has emerged in its truth as rational intelligence or 'mind proper', which constitutes the subject matter of the science of psychology. Our immediate further task is to see how phenomenology connects with psychology.

III

Psychology, Hegel tells us, has been among the worst off of the philosophical sciences, one that has benefited least from the advance of knowledge in modern times.[44] By this 'advance', I believe, Hegel has in mind

chiefly the great achievement of Kantian transcendentalism. By virtue of the Kantian philosophy, says Hegel, psychology acquired a new interest, indeed has been claimed 'as the basis of metaphysics'.[45] But because it has never attained methodological clarity, psychology remains inextricably caught in the problem of *epistasthai* and *episteme*.[46] To resolve this problem a philosophical psychology must be given a place within the doctrine of Subjective Mind as the third and culminating science of Subjective Mind, the science of 'mind proper'. While such a science deals with the subject matter of ordinary psychology, it 'must not go empirically to work, but be scientifically conceived'.[47]

But how is psychology to be 'scientifically conceived'? According to Hegel, psychology cannot be a first philosophy. For both its method and its subject matter a philosophical psychology requires a prior framework within the notion of concrete mind and the philosophical sciences generally. Only in this way will psychology be able to avoid an uncritical empiricism that dismembers the mind into 'properties', 'faculties' and 'forces', against which 'our own sense of the mind's living unity' protests,[48] and which cannot but end in reductionism, determinism and one-sided subjectivism.[49] Nor is the endeavour to show a 'natural emergence' of mental faculties a proper approach, since such a purported tracing is not equivalent to an explanation. Condillac, Hegel claims, failed in his attempt to show such a natural emergence. Condillac's categories, says Hegel, were of a 'wretched sort', lacking the essential moment of negativity necessary to demonstrate how the sensible material is 'transmuted into mind and destroyed as a sensible'.[50] The proper categories, Hegel maintains, can be developed only in a speculative science of logic.[51]

The entire realm of concrete mind, according to Hegel, presupposes a science of the 'pure essentialities of thought' as such to demonstrate the categories suitable to the investigation of mind.[52] But since psychology is a 'concrete' science, something additional is needed. As dealing with 'mind proper', psychology requires that the very notion of its subject matter be mediated by a critique of ways of thinking in general about a concrete content. This has been accomplished, Hegel claims, by phenomenology as the science of mind in its 'appearing', i.e. as consciousness whose object is an 'other' than itself. Here, as we noted, the demonstration dealt with consciousness' claims to a knowledge of an 'object' as 'existent something', as 'thing' of many 'properties', as 'force' etc. These categories of externality and objectivity, the demonstration showed, were sublated to the subjectivity of Notion, the inner self-differentiating. Thus only when the categories of objectivity have been overcome and they have been shown to be unsuitable to the subject matter of mind can there be a genuine investigation of 'mind proper'. Unlike an uncritical empiricism which views its subject matter with eyes attuned to 'objects', a philosophical psychology will not find in mind psychological atoms,

impressions, forces, causes and effects. In its aspect as a critique of empirical thinking, therefore, phenomenology is a necessary prolegomenon to psychology. Hegel does not say that psychology is to be separated from epistemology: indeed psychology is for Hegel the culminating science of cognitive mind. But when uncritical psychology puts itself forward as the basis of epistemology it cannot but produce a spurious hybrid which must straightway collapse under the Socratic objection that we cannot know what our knowing consists in until we know what is knowledge.

In psychology, says Hegel, mind 'has determined itself to the truth of the soul and of consciousness'.[53] In this third and concluding science of Subjective Mind, mind is no longer merely 'in itself' as soul, nor, as consciousness, merely 'for itself' by way of reference to other. Just as consciousness had for its object the natural soul, so mind proper 'has or rather makes consciousness its object'.[54] Mind thus begins with its 'own proper being' and relates itself only 'to its own proper determinations'. As free rational intelligence that knows itself to be objective in the world,[55] mind 'brings forth out of itself the self-developing and changing determinations of the object'. While in phenomenology alteration appeared to come from the side of the object, in psychology every content will have the twofold determination that it 'is' and is the mind's 'own'.[56]

Mind's 'own proper determinations' are intuition, imagination, memory, thinking etc. These, says Hegel, will not be picked up as 'faculties' from observation. They will be demonstrated as unfolding moments of rational intelligence in its totality as a spiritual life. Beginning with the 'show' of being determined by a content 'found' within itself, mind will proceed negatively against this show and raise itself to explicit self-determination in accordance with its notion.

As initially 'finding' itself determined, says Hegel, mind is 'intuitive', and intuition comprises the stage of intelligence in its immediacy and self-externality. But the fact that intuition is already on the level of intelligence, we may note again, marks an important difference from Kant. Kant, Hegel suggests, should have pursued his notion of an 'intuitive understanding' in another direction.[57] Since mind proper has sublated both soul and consciousness, intuition, for Hegel, is a 'feeling intelligence'. As a moment of mind in its totality, it involves the whole man. It requires that we stand 'in the centre' of the subject matter, that we relate ourselves to it with 'heart and soul', with our 'whole mind or spirit'.[58] In 'attention', which is a moment of intuition, we have a perfect example of the identity in opposition that constitutes the very notion of mind. In attending, I must 'abstract myself from myself' in order to let the subject matter have free play. At the very same time, however, I must bring to bear my fullest inner resources if I am to take the subject matter in its fullness and concreteness. In attention, says Hegel, intelli-

gence posits the found as 'a something that is' (*Seiendes*), yet whose very 'being' is a negative or 'abstract other of itself'. In this way the intuiting intelligence projects its content into space and time, the universal modes of self-externality. Hegel here notes an important difference from the cognitive situation in the phenomenology.[59] Whereas for the sensuous consciousness the object is an 'in-itself', the intuiting intelligence confers on the object the 'rational determination' of being 'the other of its own self', i.e. as posited in the spatio-temporal realm of asunderness (*Aussersichsein*). Thus space and time are forms of intuition, as Kant maintained, but they are not for that reason 'merely subjective', Hegel claims to show.[60]

Following intuition, the second stage of mind proper is 'representation'. Here intelligence frees itself from its mere 'finding' and is able to 'present' itself with its intuition from within itself.

Directing its attention inward to itself, intelligence 'recollects' the 'found' of intuition. The content is taken up into the universality of the ego, abstracted from its directly experienced spatio-temporal context, and, as 'image', posited in the ego's 'own space and time'. The image now no longer 'exists', but it does not simply disappear. It is 'unconsciously retained', says Hegel, in the 'night-like pit' of the ego,[61] in which are preserved a 'world of infinitely many images and representations without their being in consciousness'. In 'recalling' the image from the 'simple night' of the ego, the representing intelligence confers on the image a determinate being (*Dasein*) whilst the intuition simultaneously acquires generality. Through such repeated recallings, the image obtains the presentness of a *Vor-stellung*: I can 'set it before' myself without the direct presence of the intuition. In this way the recollecting intelligence raises itself to the 'reproductive imagination'.

As reproductive imagination, the intelligence brings forth images from the interiority of the ego, which, in its universality, provides a general representation for the connecting of images. As the identical power over its images and representations, the 'associative intelligence' informs its stock with its own subjective purport – just as the soul informed its bodily affections with its subjective purpose in habit.[62] Hereby intelligence has raised itself to symbolizing, allegorizing, poetizing imagination, the 'creative' imagination that Hegel terms *Phantasie*. In the 'signmaking' *Phantasie*, says Hegel, the imaginative intelligence so permeates the image as to render it but the outer expression of the ego's inner meaning. The *Phantasie* in its 'sign' has so dissolved the immediacy of the intuition that – as in the case of a flag – the sign serves as but the incidental reminder of the inner subjective purport. The intuition now only 'is' as something sublated (*ein Aufgehobenes*). This provides Hegel's deduction of language. Infused with a meaning wholly within the intelligence's own ideal space and time, the essential character of the intuition-become-sign

is that of a 'being-there in time' which is just as well a 'vanishing of the being-there in that it is'. This is the verbal sign.

As an external psychical positedness deriving from the intelligence's own anthropological (natural) being, says Hegel, the sign is the vocal note, 'the fulfilled expression of self-announcing inwardness'.[63] In sublating the intuition in the verbal sign, the intelligence shows itself to be the spiritual 'inner time' which, like time in general, sublates the asunderness of space.[64] Thus language is of prime importance in Hegel's purported overcoming of Kant's limiting of understanding to sensuous experience. In its creation and use of language, the intelligence invests its spiritual inner with the form of an outer whose 'being' is straightway a vanishing. Like Kant's productive imagination, Hegel's signmaking *Phantasie* is a 'mediator' of intuitions and concepts. But the mediation is a sublation, and the mediator is not a 'faculty' but the ego in its totality as a spiritual life. The sublation of the spatial intuition in the vanishing temporality of the vocal note involves for Hegel the whole inner spirituality of the intelligence as negative power over its inner manifold of feelings and representations.

Just as the image was inwardized and sublated in the verbal sign, the latter as still an 'outer' is again inwardized by the intelligence as memory. The spoken word is an external vanishing singularity. Through its inwardization in the 'name-retaining memory', it obtains universality and permanence. The name as intuition is itself made a representation, and name and meaning are directly connected for the intelligence. 'We think in names', says Hegel.[65] Given the name 'lion', I need neither an intuition nor an image of the animal, the name alone serving as 'imageless simple representation'. Independent now of both intuition and image, the intelligence as 'reproductive memory' possesses and recognizes 'the subject matter (*Sache*) in the name and the name with the subject matter'. In this way, Hegel tells us, the intelligence has become 'self-intuiting'.

But the fact that the representing intelligence can now fluently express its inwardness in a medium of its own making is no guarantee of the truth of its expression. My thinking in names can be a bad thinking if I allow it to be governed by personal associations. Even my inner genius, the ultimate source of my creative *Phantasie*, is but my selfhood in its particularity. To actualize itself as the 'inherently universal' and the 'simple truth' of its own expressions the intelligence must negate its own particular inwardness, wipe the slate clean, as it were, to enable its inner content to acquire genuine objectivity. This takes place, according to Hegel, in 'mechanical memory'. In rote, says Hegel, intelligence 'posits itself as the Being, the universal space of the name as such': that is to say, 'the Being of meaningless words'.

It seems odd that Hegel should view the fulfilment of the representing intelligence in the negativity of rote. But the negation is also positive.

The significance of mechanical memory, Hegel contends, does not consist merely in its 'uses' but in the organic role it plays in the intelligence's negation of its 'particular' inwardness and its raising itself to the universality of thought and Being.[66] In rote my subjective connection of word and meaning is dissolved, but the dissolution clears the way for the *Sache selbst.*[67] Since the meaning of 'synthesis' in representation is a linking (*Verknüpfung*) of 'elements' that retain the show of externality towards one another,[68] the overcoming of mere representational thinking must be the clearing out of its source in the particularity of the subjectivity. In rote, says Hegel, intelligence makes itself to Being (*Sein*), lowers itself to the sheer externality of a 'universal space'.[69] But since this 'space' is the intelligence itself, the subjectivity establishes itself as the universal power over its representations which have thereby a Being that is the intelligence's own. In mechanical memory, says Hegel, 'one of the two dynamic factors of thought, viz. objectivity, is here put in intelligence itself as a quality of it'.[70]

With this last step as representing intelligence, mind becomes 'for itself' the identity which it is 'in itself' as reason. The inwardness of intelligence is now 'to itself Being': subjectivity explicitly knowing itself as one with objectivity. Hereby intelligence as memory passes over to thinking. Reason can now 'exist' in the subject as the individual's own activity of thinking.

Hegel deals only briefly in psychology with the forms of rational thinking as activities of the subjectivity. In 'understanding' and 'judgment', says Hegel, thinking is still dependent on a content 'given'. In 'syllogism', however, the content derives from the intelligence's own distinctions of form. Subjective Mind has now reached its goal as the 'self-knowing truth'. The entire movement of the sciences of anthropology, phenomenology and psychology has been to show that 'the Notion as such can only be apprehended by mind, of which it is not only the peculiar property but the pure self.'

In our brief discussion of Hegel's doctrine of Subjective Mind, we have focused on the overall structure of the demonstration, particularly as a problem of the interrelation of the three sciences: anthropology, phenomenology and psychology. We have not challenged the demonstration itself but sought to show how its triadic structure can be viewed in the light of Hegel's endeavour to resolve the subject–object *aporia* of post-Cartesian, particularly Kantian, *Erkenntnistheorie.*

Hegel, as we have seen, seeks to overcome the Kantian position by showing that its standpoint *within* consciousness is not an absolute one. Consciousness, the anthropology claims to demonstrate 'awakens in the soul'. The dualism of subject and object on the level of consciousness is prefigured in the 'immediate' relation of the psychical subjectivity to its natural substantial being as its 'predicate'. Ego and object first arise out

of the soul's 'actualization' – its setting its natural content opposite itself as an objectively structured outer world. This *Ur-teil* establishes the principle of the subject–object relation on the level of consciousness. In this way anthropology furnishes the notion of subjectivity as consciousness: to be self-related 'mediately' through relation to its 'other', which is implicitly its own substantial being. This notion makes possible phenomenology as the science of consciousness as 'reflection', or the science of mind in its 'appearing'.

In pressing its claims to a knowledge of the object, the ego of consciousness progressively brings forth logical determinations of the latter which appear to the ego to come from the side of the object. Proceeding in terms of such forms of subjective 'certainty', the phenomenological demonstration takes the objective categories not 'from formal logic as given' but as arising in the struggles towards knowledge by the subjectivity and in the necessary life-shapes of individual and social self-consciousness. From contingent self-external singularity, both subject and object are shown as rising to the inner self-differentiating universality of Notion and converging in universal self-consciousness as reason. Its certainty raised to truth, consciousness as mind's appearance has become identical with its essence. Hereby the science of phenomenology yields the notion of mind proper, the subject matter of psychology.

Just as in phenomenology the objective categories were not taken from formal logic but demonstrated in a 'genuinely synthetic progress', so too in psychology the mind's 'own proper determinations' are not taken up empirically but shown as unfolding moments of mind as a spiritual totality. This genuine demonstration in psychology, however, is possible only after the demonstrations in anthropology and phenomenology. Objectivity must first be shown to emerge as the *Ur-teil* of the subject. The categories of objectivity must then be sublated in the movement of consciousness itself, whilst subjectivity is simultaneously shown to sublate its appearance of being determined externally. Only then is it possible for psychology 'to be scientifically conceived' and not 'go empirically to work'. In the overall movement from soul through consciousness to mind proper, sensibility and understanding are shown not to be separate stems of human knowledge but moments of mind in its totality. Negating its modes of self-externality as 'intuitive' and 'representative', intelligence as mind proper raises itself to conceptual thinking, whose universals are neither empty forms nor thoughts divorced from Being.

It is in the doctrine of Subjective Mind, I believe, that we best see Hegel's attempt – while retaining the insights of transcendental philosophy – to overcome subjective idealism and unite *epistasthai* and *episteme* in his one central conception:

Truth, aware of what it is, is spirit.

Notes

1 The present article is based in part on a paper 'Hegel's Conception of Psychology', delivered before the colloquium on *Hegel and the Sciences*, sponsored by the Hegel Society of America and the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science, Boston University, 4–6 December 1970.

2 *Theaetetus* 196E.

3 *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. William Wallace, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1892), p. 17 (hereafter referred to as *L*). See also *Glauben und Wissen* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1962), p. 15, where Hegel includes Locke in his criticism.

4 The sciences of Subjective Mind are contained in the first part of the third main division of the *Encyclopaedia*. See *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, 1830, ed. F. Nicolin and O. Pöggeler, 6th edn (Hamburg, 1959).

5 *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford, 1971), hereafter referred to as *PhM*.

6 Walter Kaufmann, for example, denies there is a necessary order and implies we need not trouble to look for one. (*Hegel: Interpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, New York, Doubleday, 1965, pp. 246ff.) With regard to the appearance of a phenomenology in the doctrine of Subjective Mind, J. N. Findlay says: it 'was probably put in to obtain a threefold scheme, or perhaps simply because Hegel could not bear to leave out the brilliant treatment of his youth' (*Hegel: A Re-examination*, New York, Macmillan, 1958, p. 302). Professor Findlay recently told me in conversation that he would not now insist on this view.

7 Unless otherwise stated, I shall be dealing only with the phenomenology of the *Encyclopaedia*. As to the problem of the 'two phenomenologies', little has thus far been written in English, and I shall not deal with the problem here. See, however, Hans F. Fulda, *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), pp. 110ff.

8 *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York, Humanities Press, 1969), p. 789 (hereafter referred to as *SL*).

9 *SL* p. 777.

10 *SL*, pp. 585ff.

11 *PhM*, pp. 8–15. See also *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A. V. Miller, with Foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford, 1970), pp. 443–5 (hereafter referred to as *PhN*).

12 *PhM*, pp. 10–11.

13 *PhM*, p. 36.

14 *PhM*, p. 146; see also *SL*, p. 766.

15 For example, sight reveals materiality in its moment of 'pure ideality': light; touch, the moment of materiality as 'solid reality' etc. See *PhM*, pp. 76–82, 197; *PhN*, pp. 382–4.

16 For a brief summary of Hegel's anthropology which notes connections with depth psychology and the work of certain contemporary thinkers, see Jan van der Meulen, 'Hegels Lehre von Leib, Seele, und Geist', *Hegel-Studien*, Bd 2, 1963, pp. 251–74.

17 *PhM*, p. 94.

18 *PhM*, p. 96. See also Hegel's discussion of Socrates' daimonion in *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane, 3 vols. (New York, Humanities Press, 1955), vol. 1, pp. 391, 421–2.

19 *PhM*, pp. 122ff.

20 *PhM*, p. 140.

21 *PhM*, p. 147.

22 *PhM*, p. 151.
23 *PhM*, p. 153.
24 An important exception was of course Leibniz. For Hegel's critique of Leibniz's doctrine of the *petites perceptions*, see *SL*, p. 396.
25 See, for example, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York, Macmillan, 1955), pp. 136–7.
26 'The ordinary classification of notions, as clear, distinct, and adequate, is no part of the notion; it belongs to psychology' (*L*, p. 296.) Hegel means this in a pejorative sense of an uncritical psychology.
27 *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (New York, Macmillan, 1956), B142.
28 *L*, pp. 83ff.
29 *SL*, pp. 586ff.
30 *L*, pp. 297–8.
31 *PhM*, p. 151.
32 ibid.
33 *SL*, p. 777.
34 *PhM*, p. 153.
35 *SL* p. 181.
36 *PhM*, p. 157.
37 *PhM*, p. 184.
38 *PhM*, pp. 155–6.
39 *SL*, pp. 585ff.
40 *SL*, pp. 63–4.
41 *SL*, pp. 577, 580–2.
42 *PhM*, pp. 177–8, 180.
43 *PhM*, p. 159.
44 *PhM*, p. 186; see also p. 3, where Hegel says Aristotle's treatises on the soul are 'still by far the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, works of philosophical value on this topic'.
45 *PhM*, p. 186.
46 'This position of psychology, mixing it up with forms belonging to the range of consciousness and with anthropology, has led to no improvement in its own condition: but it has had the further effect that, both for the mind as such, and for metaphysics and philosophy generally, all attempts have been abandoned to ascertain the necessity of essential and actual reality, to get at the notion and the truth' (*PhM*, pp. 186–7).
47 *SL*, p. 782; see also *PhM*, p. 25.
48 *PhM*, p. 4.
49 *PhM*, pp. 3ff., 189; *SL*, p. 489.
50 *PhM*, p. 183; see also *SL*, pp. 588–9.
51 All that is necessary to achieve 'scientific progress', says Hegel, is 'this quite simple insight': the 'recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive' (*SL*, p. 54.) It is this principle that pervades Hegel's speculative logic.
52 See especially *SL*, p. 498.
53 *PhM*, p. 179.
54 *PhM*, p. 184.
55 See above, p. 000.
56 *PhM*, p. 184.
57 *SL*, p. 593.
58 *PhM*, p. 199.

59 *PhM*, p. 159.

60 *PhM*, p. 198.

61 *PhM*, p. 204. This preservation of the no longer 'existent', says Hegel, can only be understood if mind is grasped in its essence as 'ideality' – as the negation of the real, but a negation where the real is put past, virtually retained (*aufbewahrt*), although it does not exist,' (*PhM*, p. 92).

62 See above, pp. 92–3.

63 *PhM*, p. 214. See also the anthropological discussion of voice and language, *PhM*, p. 87.

64 *PhM*, pp. 213–14; *PhN*, pp. 33ff.

65 *PhM*, p. 220. See also *SL*, pp. 31ff.

66 *PhM*, p. 222.

67 'Intelligence, therefore, in filling itself with the word, receives into itself the nature of the thing (*Sache*). But this reception has, at the same time, the meaning that intelligence thereby takes on the nature of a *thing* and to such a degree that subjectivity, in its distinction from the thing, becomes quite empty, a mindless container of words, that is, a mechanical memory' (*PhM*, p. 221.)

68 'Synthesis', says Hegel, suggests 'an external bringing together of mutually external things already there' (*SL*, p. 96).

69 See also Hegel's treatment of the 'unhappy consciousness', whose mindless repeating of foreign words is part of its sublating itself as contingent particularity to the universality of substance and Being (*Phenomenology of Mind*, op. cit., pp. 265–7.)

70 *PhM*, p. 222.

Language and consciousness in Hegel's Jena writings

Daniel J. Cook

In recent years, several commentators on Hegel's philosophy have investigated the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and some of his Jena writings[1] in order to trace the development of his social thought.[2] Such commentators have usually fastened on to Hegel's distinctive treatment of the role of work and the struggle for recognition in the Jena writings or on to the famed 'Lordship and Bondage' passage at the beginning of the *second* major section of the *Phänomenologie* – that is Self-Consciousness. Their expositions of Hegel have usually been provocative, revealing how his early thoughts prefigured his later system and how he applied his dialectical method to the explanation of certain basic interpersonal and intergroup relations. However, these writers invariably neglect the earlier portions of these writings by Hegel, among his first attempts at developing a systematic philosophy.

In perusing the various early drafts of Hegel's philosophy of Spirit, written during his stay in Jena – viz. his 'System der Sittlichkeit' and the relevant portions of his *Jenenser Realphilosophie I* and *II* – one is immediately struck by the prominent role that speech (*Rede*), signification (*Bezeichnung*) or language (*Sprache*) play in Hegel's development of these systems. In the two latter works, language – in one form or another – represents the first productive activity of consciousness and the first concrete, external form (*Dasein*) of Spirit (*Geist*). Furthermore, the role of language figures prominently in the *first* major section of the *Phänomenologie*, that of Consciousness.[3] Subsequently in that work, Hegel groups language and labour together as both representing man's first attempt at asserting himself in his world.[4] The important role of language at the beginning of the *Phänomenologie* is quite understandable when we realize that the *Realphilosophie II* (of 1805/6), which particularly stresses the formative role of language in the intellectual social development

(*Bildung*) of consciousness, was written concurrently with the first part of the *Phänomenologie*.[5]

Finally, Hegel devotes a substantial portion of the Preface to the second edition of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* to the role of language (and logic) in man's intellectual development. Language is the first medium whereby man appropriates the world for himself and transforms it, at least formally, into something rational and supra-natural.[6] Man does not first relate to his world by practically changing its material conditions – either through labour or interpersonal struggle – but initially attempts to master it theoretically through the production of a language. As Hegel was to put it later.

> In speech man is productive; it is the first externality that he gives himself, the simplest form of existence which he reaches in consciousness. What man represents to himself, he inwardly places before himself as spoken.[7]

Though the above commentators may mention the role of language in determining Hegel's notion of *praxis* or his conception of social development, they pass over it quickly or immediately absorb it into their discussion of interpersonal relations and productivity, without dwelling upon the theoretical activity of signification which conditions them. In this essay, I would like to examine the nature and role of signification and language in Hegel's description of man's intellectual and social development (*Bildung*). The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate the importance of language in Hegel's analysis of the development of consciousness, thereby shedding further light on the origins of his social thought.

The first part of this essay speculates on some of the influences upon Hegel's early conception of language; then the role of language in his early attempts at a philosophical system will be examined, showing the importance of language for understanding some key notions in his thought; finally the role of language in the development of consciousness in the *Phänomenologie* will be discussed.

I

One of the chief topics of discussion in Enlightenment circles in the latter half of the eighteenth century was the origin and nature of human language and its relation to the intellectual and cultural development (*Bildung*) of man and society. Though a whole constellation of issues and problems was generated by this topic, certain general beliefs on the matter were held by most concerned. One of these was that there was a definite correlation between the *Bildung* of a people and its language.

Johann Gottfried Herder's whole approach to the philosophy of history and culture assumed that the intellectual and religious development of a people – its 'genius' or 'spirit' – were reflected in the language it spoke.[8] In his early years, Hegel composed many themes on other Enlightenment thinkers who reflected this prevailing sentiment.[9]

In his early writings on religion, Hegel develops this view into an argument as to why Jesus and his disciples were not accepted by the Jews: they simply did not understand one another. Within a society using apparently the same language, words can have different meanings, according to the *Bildung* of its speakers.[10]

The relationship between a language and its people has first been mentioned because, to be sure, language arises only within a community, and is not the invention of a solitary individual. Hegel, however, not only recognized the integral relation between a *Volk* and its language, but stressed the role of language for the *Bildung* of an individual within a community. One recent interpreter of Hegel's thought sees his recognition of this factor as an important merit of his social philosophy.[11]

One work which brings together many of the ideas on language which influenced Hegel was Herder's *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. What makes this work the likeliest candidate for a direct influence on Hegel's early thoughts on language is Herder's insistence on the centrality of the sense of hearing over that of sight. Writers on empirical psychology at this time (for example, J. N. Tetens, whose works undoubtedly influenced Hegel) usually placed the sense of sight above that of hearing.[12]

Herder claims that since man comes to speech and invents language only through hearing, 'hearing has in a certain sense come to be the middle one of the senses, the gateway to his soul, and the connecting link among the remaining senses. . . . The sense for language has become our central and unifying sense; we are creatures of language.'[13] Herder sees hearing – and its correlative, spoken language – as the only adequate means for bridging the gap between the dumb, all too subjective world of feeling within us and the cold, overwhelming objective world without us.[14] Hearing is also the most temporally orientated sense for Herder, most capable of capturing and reproducing – through language – the flux and dynamism of human experience.[15] The products of hearing and speaking, a language, an ordered system of signs, is itself the immediate manifestation of objectification of man's native reasoning power.[16] Herder makes another important point: man cannot reason without the tool of language,[17] yet he can only reason with himself the way he might reason with others.[18] The exercise and expression of reason is ultimately based upon the use of a dialogical tool – spoken language.

The idea of language as being both a subjective product and yet the reflection of an objective and interpersonal world is critical to Hegel's

conception of language. As the first expression of man's rationality, language will play for Hegel a primary role in the development of various forms of expression and human institutions. The reflective, ordered articulation and institutionalization of man's experience – this movement towards objectification, as Hegel calls it – is precisely what he is trying to systematize. Man's own awareness of the structured development of such a process is that part of a *Realphilosophie* which Hegel calls a 'Philosophie des Geistes'.

II

Hegel begins his first 'Philosophie des Geistes' with individual consciousness confronting its world as an undifferentiated member of a community. Consciousness first expresses itself by attempting to master the world of nature which confronts it. Its first attempt at such mastery is theoretical, not practical, through the process of signification.[19] Consciousness ascribes to that which is seen or contemplated (*Angeschautes*) an ideal meaning or existence which transcends its position in the natural world. This ideal dimension is the sign (*Zeichen*) or name. Signifying and naming can be defined as the process whereby objects or sounds are posited as being another-than-it-is-for-itself – something other than its natural (i.e. objective) meaning or existence. Objects and sounds in the world of consciousness are used as signs signifying something determined by the subject himself, in order to overcome its sense of separation from the object world. By sign-making and naming, consciousness displays its initial mastery of the world. Signification not only serves as a necessary condition for the operation of consciousness; its very nature is characterized by its sign-making activity.[20]

In the final, unpublished draft of his 'Philosophie des Geistes', Hegel stresses the working role of the ego in this process of signification. Consciousness first gains a sense of its independent existence by internalizing (*er-innern*) images of the objects it intuits, and then freely manipulating them. This internal world of images exists solely for the self, for me, or in Hegel's language, has '*Fürmichsein*'. Such images are invested with another meaning that is a function of the subject and not the external object; it becomes a 'wholly other' (*ganzes Anderes*) or a sign.[21]

In this draft, Hegel stresses this '*Fürmichsein*' of the object as sign, viewing it as an extension of the self. The process of externalizing (*entäussern*) this existing inner world of signs ('*die selbst da ist*') – thus endowing it with determinate existence (*Dasein*) – is accomplished by the power of name-giving, by language ('die *Sprache* als die *namengebende Kraft*').[22] Hegel sees this name-giving power as the first actual working of *Geist*.[23] This theoretic activity of the ego is a creative one, for in externalizing

and reifying an internal system of signs, it creates something (*ein Ding*, *ein Seiendes*) that externally corresponds to the idea of the ego, and is a projection of it. These created names are the ego's own (*seinige*) and come to represent the very being (*Sein*) of the named objects for the naming ego. Hegel's play on *Sein* here accentuates the 'being for the subject' of the external object named, as well as the name itself. Man's first step in his drive to control the external world of natural objects occurs in the process of naming.[24]

Throughout these manuscripts, Hegel stresses the theoretical (ideal) aspect of the process of signification and naming, as over against the practical, actual changes undergone through labour and the mutual struggle for recognition.[25] Nevertheless, Hegel does ascribe to the process of signification – and its systematized product, language – a critical role in the intellectual and social development (*Bildung*) of consciousness. Though the individual gains a fuller sense of his own identity (viz self-consciousness) through actually mastering the world about him, such activities as physical labour and inter-personal and inter-group conflict constitute more advanced forms of a dialectical process first adumbrated by Hegel in his treatment of language.

Such prominent Hegelian notions as *Vermittlung* and *Entfremdung* are in fact developed by Hegel in the context of his discussion on language. Hegel, for example, sees language as the initial mediator between one consciousness and the others confronting it. Language is 'in the middle', is the medium (Hegel plays on the words *Mitte* and *Mittel*) for helping consciousness gain an awareness of its own identity by asserting itself in the face of other consciousnesses.[26] Furthermore, signification is that theoretical activity whereby one attempts to overcome that felt separation or alienation from one's world by ascribing names to it, invented by the subject. Yet by making something into another-than-it-is-for-itself, by making something into an object for a subject, into a sign, consciousness is at the same time further separating or alienating itself from its natural, immediate condition, producing that opposition that consciousness transcends in the activity of labour.[27] It is at the level of language and, relatedly, language learning, that Hegel in fact formulates some of his initial ideas on the notion of alienation (*Entfremdung*). For example, in a speech as rector of the Nürnberg Gymnasium, Hegel compares one's confrontation with an alien tongue to the opposition one experiences when initially alienated from one's immediate world. The educational experience of learning a foreign tongue is not unlike the experience of consciousness in first overcoming its sense of alienation from its immediate world by learning the use of a system of signs, a language. Such alienation, however, is a necessary condition for theoretical *Bildung*.[28] *Bildung* begins only with a conscious confrontation of a subject with

something alien to it, which it tries to appropriate and master through various means, the first of them being language.

By assigning and manipulating names, consciousness asserts itself in its world. Inner ideas and feelings can now also be communicated and consciousness thereby gains a further understanding of itself and its world. This heightened intellectual awareness and sense of individuality is also a condition for the development of interpersonal communication. However, in order for two individuals to be able to communicate, or to work together or to be recognized by one another, a common universe of experience and discourse must be assumed. This implicit universality of meaning is present only in a people. At the stage of *Volksgeist*, in his *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*, Hegel notes that the preceding expressions and institutions of *Geist* (language as well as labour and the struggle for recognition) exist only within a human community. In its language, a people first expresses its own essence and being. Genuine identification with and recognition of others is possible only through a common language.[29] Though on the one hand a people does not truly have its own identity and spiritual independence unless it has its own language,[30] on the other, language – a community of discourse – exists only within a pre-existent community of individuals. Hegel meets this problem of circularity by saying that the language of the individual in effect is reconstructed, transcended, when it becomes the language of a people. It only fulfils its role (its *Begriff* in Hegel's terms) as the basis for the communication and universalization of the experience of various individuals within a people.[31]

Language is no longer merely an ideal *externa*lization of an individual's picture of his world, but is the *internal* mediating element among individuals within a genuine community. Language now fulfils its potentiality as tangibly, existentially representing a common universe of experience and discourse.[32] The language of a people embodies its common experience and ideals in a manner which makes true *Bildung* possible. When one member of a society can communicate with another, he is recognized by that other individual as representing and articulating their common world of experience and discourse. Only then is genuine intersubjectivity possible: the condition Hegel sets (in the *Phänomenologie*) for entrance into the realm of Spirit.

A recent article by Jürgen Habermas,[33] perhaps the best on the subject, traces the origin of such notions as alienation (*Entfremdung*), externalization or objectification (*Entäusserung*), appropriation (*Aneignung*) and reconcilation (*Versöhnung*) to Hegel's Jena writings. Habermas is primarily interested in Hegel's ideas on alienation, work and personal interaction and shows how these concepts serve as models for understanding the development of Hegel's mature social, political and legal thought. In the light of our discussion, it is interesting to note that Habermas, for

example, in his citations from the Jena writings skips over much of the material on language (viz. the title of his essay; 'Arbeit und Interaktion'),[34] initially restricting the latter merely to the theoretical application of symbols to the external world by a solitary individual.[35] Habermas assumes the primacy of *sittliche* interaction and mutual recognition, and therefore, concomitantly, the derivative nature of the other types of mediation or interaction, i.e. language and labour.[36]

Eventually, however, Habermas acknowledges the importance of language for social interaction,[37] but nevertheless assimilates all stages of the *Realphilosophie* dialectic to the one of reciprocal recognition.[38] In a certain sense, in fact, the difference between language and labour on the one hand, and the reciprocal recognition of *Sittlichkeit* on the other, is only apparent.[39] Despite his neglect of the extensive material on signification and language, Habermas cannot avoid relying upon the mediation of language to characterize his thesis concerning the nature of *Geist*. In expounding the latter, he makes constant use of words such as 'communicate', 'communicative', 'symbolic mediation'.[40] As we have seen in the last section, some of Hegel's key notions were developed in his treatment of language in the *Realphilosophie*. Habermas' own discussion of the Jena writings demonstrates this point.

The interests of most recent philosophers such as Habermas have been orientated towards those elements in Hegel's early thought which would explicate what Marx – as Habermas points out – lumped together as '*gesellschaftliche Praxis*'. Marcuse and Kojève have also stressed the importance of labour and the struggle for recognition in their treatment of Hegel. In their desire to trace the origins and development of Hegel's social thought, such thinkers have – unlike Marx, who at least dwelt on the theoretical origins of the *Bildungsprozess* and the notion of *Entfremdung* in his '1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts', but then rejected Hegel's approach as insufficient and abstract – neglected the important role of such intellectual processes as signification and its subsequent development and systematization into a common universe of discourse, a national language. Marx and his disciples may have decided that Hegel's philosophy is meaningful only if it is 'turned on its head', but this does not alter the fact that Hegel's earliest systematic thoughts were greatly influenced by his understanding of the nature and role of language in the *Bildung* of consciousness.

III

All the commentators mentioned above – including Habermas, who deals primarily with the *Realphilosophie* – rely heavily upon the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* when discussing the development of Hegel's social thought.

In dealing with the *Phänomenologie*, such writers usually neglect the first section (Consciousness),[41] and begin their detailed treatment with the 'Lordship and Bondage' passage at the beginning of the second section of that book.[42] I propose to examine this first section of the *Phänomenologie* and demonstrate the significant role of language in it. As was noted above, much of the *Phänomenologie* (especially the earlier portions to be considered here) was written concurrently with *Realphilosophie II*. It is interesting to see the parallel roles of language in these two major works of Hegel's Jena period. Such an investigation should strengthen the thesis of this article: viz. that most writers have not paid sufficient attention to the role of language in Hegel's theory of consciousness and have therefore neglected an important element in the development of his social thought.

We have hitherto dealt with commentators on Hegel who have been greatly influenced by the Continental Marxist tradition. In discussing the relation between language and consciousness in the *Phänomenologie*, I will restrict myself to the interpretation of a writer who explicitly divorces himself from this tradition in order to make Hegel more meaningful to Anglo-American audiences ignorant of (or hostile to) the sort of *Hegelforschung* discussed above. In *An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics*,[43] Ivan Soll examines the relation between knowing and acting, especially as treated in the first parts of the *Phänomenologie*. After briefly mentioning the three forms of Consciousness ('Sense-Certainty', 'Perception' and 'Understanding'), Soll proceeds to analyse the section on Self-Consciousness, dismissing this first section as 'plainly' and 'monolithically epistemological'.[44] However, as Soll himself later states, Hegel 'sensibly believes that theories do have practical implications, and that to hold a theory seriously and sincerely involves *living* in accordance with it, as well as mouthing it'.[45] While the section on Consciousness is largely epistemological, it is also a manifestation of the same 'drive' ('quest', 'endeavour') which characterises later forms of consciousness.[46] Nevertheless, the general thrust of Soll's argument is that one must turn at the very outset to the section on Self-Consciousness – where consciousness resorts to physical labour and personal interaction – to gain an understanding of the *Bildung* of consciousness.

In the light of this view – analogous to the position of the Marxist commentators mentioned in the last section – it is instructive to examine Hegel's treatment of the first form of consciousness in the *Phänomenologie*, 'Sense-Certainty' (*sinnliche Gewissheit*). His strategy in this section is to demonstrate the dialectical nature of naive consciousness' experience in 'Sense-Certainty'. One way to do so, according to Hegel, is through an analysis of the language consciousness uses in its initial attempts at relating itself to its world and appropriating it for its own purposes. Consciousness claims that immediate awareness of the particulars present

to the senses constitutes the ultimate truth to be gained of its world. Hegel elaborates upon the first two arguments in 'Sense-Certainty',[47] through an appeal to the simple words used to refer to the individual objects of sense experience, for example, 'This', 'Here' and 'Now'. Such words do not *per se* refer to particular objects, but are the most general terms in the language. The language of consciousness in 'Sense-Certainty' is therefore 'truer' than its initial immediate experience.[48] Consciousness' attempt, through language, at relating itself to its world merely reinforces its earlier realization that the particulars of sense experience can only be understood as universals.[49]

In the second argument, Hegel invokes the same principle with regard to the use of the first person singular pronoun, 'I'. 'I' does not refer to a particular conscious state or even to the particular consciousness having that state. Once again, Hegel claims, such incongruence is an indication of the actual universal quality of sense experience. In the third and final argument in 'Sense-Certainty', Hegel avoids any appeal to language and the vagaries of such indexical terms as 'This' or 'I' (i.e. he relies on the mere act of pointing), yet the result is the same.

What concerns us is Hegel's appeal to language as the best means whereby consciousness becomes aware of the true nature of its 'immediate' experience.[50] Through the use of language, man first transcends his initial experience of the world as a collection of independent, unrelated particulars, and begins to recognize the underlying identity between himself and the external world of objects. The world of objects (first argument of 'Sense-Certainty') and the self (second argument) – as well as the relation between them (third argument) – can be interpreted according to the same principles, first manifested in the use and understanding of language. Though Hegel, to be sure, is criticizing certain doctrines of immediate knowledge, his intent is not purely epistemological; he relates his endeavour in this section to other considerations relevant to his general account of the *Bildungsprozess* of consciousness.

This can be seen when we examine the closing paragraphs of the section on 'Sense-Certainty', following those which simply expound the three arguments mentioned above. If Hegel's intent here were strictly propaedeutical and epistemological, then these paragraphs would appear to be inappropriate or irrelevant. First, there is a lengthy paragraph depicting the irony – almost in existential terms – of consciousness caught up in the dialectical process (*Bewegung*).[51] Hegel views the condition of natural or naive (*natürliche*) consciousness in 'Sense-Certainty' as a universal one, always being enacted and re-enacted, with the outcome always being exactly the opposite of consciousness' original intention (*Meinung*). In the final paragraph of this section, Hegel ironically describes the 'magical' power of language which transmutes the particulars of sense experience into universals as 'divine'.[52]

Second, Hegel explicitly states that his analysis of this first form of consciousness has practical implications which can already be anticipated at this theoretical stage.[53] A comprehension of the truth of 'Sense-Certainty' in Consciousness will thus help us to understand the dialectical process which will take place at the very beginning of Self-Consciousness – i.e. that of Desire (*die Begierde*) – preparatory to the struggle for mutual recognition.[54] An examination of the relation between consciousness and its world is a necessary condition for understanding the later *Bildung* of consciousness in its relation to other objects (for example, ideas of work and property), or other consciousnesses (for example, personal interaction and mutual recognition) in its world. In the penultimate paragraph of this section, where Hegel explicitly allows himself to anticipate the practical implications of the result of the dialectic of 'Sense-Certainty', he goes to great, even fanciful, lengths to justify the conclusion that the 'objects of sense' (*sinnliche Gegenstande*) are not *per se* the ultimate constituents of reality. He first appeals to ancient classical wisdom (viz. the 'Eleusinian mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus') and concludes by invoking the behaviour of dumb animals (who unceremoniously gobble up such objects) to illustrate his claim that 'all of nature celebrates . . . this revelation, which teaches us what the truth of things of sense (really) is'.[55] The use of such examples may appear ludicrous, but they do testify to the seriousness with which Hegel viewed the non-epistemological implications of his theory of consciousness. Were this intent purely epistemological – as the commentators mentioned above seem to think – then such excursuses could not be adequately explained.[56] Once we recognize the significance of such passages as 'Sense-Certainty' for the *Bildung* of consciousness, then such excursuses can be seen as an integral part of Hegel's general strategy in the *Phänomenologie*.

Furthermore, returning to our main theme, Hegel's constant references to the role of language in the dialectical process which characterizes the development of consciousness can now be appreciated. They parallel – and serve as a concrete application of – the rather abstract discussion of signification and language in the *Realphilosophie*. Should the reader think that the prominent role of language in 'Sense-Certainty' in the *Phänomenologie* is tangential to the *Bildung* of consciousness, or its appearance there fortuitous or coincidental, a brief look at the other two parts in Consciousness – 'Perception' and 'Understanding' – should persuade him to the contrary.

In 'Perception' ('Wahrnehmung'), consciousness is aware of the mediated nature of the objects present to it; it views what it perceives as a thing with many properties, a 'This' that is in effect a nexus of many 'not-Thises' or universals. It says that these *different* universals or properties coexist in the *same* thing, compatible with, but indifferent to, one another: 'we say of the thing, "it is white, and *also* cubical and also tart",

and so on'. The word 'also' refers to the *thing* as 'the general medium wherein the many properties subsist externally to one another . . . without cancelling one another'.[57] But, according to Hegel, each property has a reality and exclusive identity apart from and beyond its presence in this particular object with its own characteristic set of properties: we say '*so far as* it is white it is not cubical, and *in so far as* it is cubical and also white it is not tart, and so on'.[58] Consciousness then realizes that it can reconcile the apparent contradiction present in perception (viz. how the necessary *simplicity* of a thing can be compatible with the *diversity* of its properties), only by positing the existence of an underlying *unperceived* substance or substratum. The need for such a doctrine is brought to light through the language *perceiving* consciousness has to use to come to terms with its world. The language of perception thus carries with it its own dialectical undoing; the language of 'Here' and 'Now' in 'Sense-Certainty', which became the language of 'Also' and 'in so far as' in 'Perception' in turn becomes the language of general scientific laws in 'Understanding'.

In 'Force and Understanding' ('Kraft und Verstand'), as the final part in Consciousness is called, Hegel deals with the critical transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. His involved discussion has many fascinating aspects, but we shall highlight only one simple point: the role of language in initial attempts at scientific explanation. The experience and language of consciousness in 'perception' made it realize the need for a non-perceptual, intelligible framework in order to understand its world. Such a supersensible framework – whether governed by doctrines concerning substance or laws of nature – is endowed by consciousness with the power of explaining the sensible world. Such an intelligible world is, however, nothing but a projection of the requirements of understanding consciousness itself. The elements – for example, the general concepts and particular constructs of scientific theories – of this projected world are not distinguishable or present as such in the external physical world. Furthermore, such general laws are initially just restatements of the same phenomena in different terms.[59] Nevertheless, the mere expression of such laws – in themselves strictly verbal and tautological, as Hegel says – makes consciousness realize that knowledge of the laws governing the external world is really knowledge of the processes governing its own understanding. When consciousness grasps this fact, it becomes self-consciousness: 'conscious of itself in its otherness' (i.e. the external world). Such a realization occurs through the agency of language which is the means for the articulation of such general laws of nature.

Thus it can be shown that at all three stages of Consciousness – 'Sense-Certainty', 'Perception' and 'Understanding' – language plays a significant role in the way consciousness comes to terms with its world. Furthermore, the dialectical process of experience that Hegel outlines in the *Phänomen-*

ologie appears – at least on the level of Consciousness – to be immanent in the languages consciousness itself uses to describe its world. As we have just seen, Hegel often analyses these various languages to illustrate the dialectical movement underway.[60]

In the previous section of this article, we saw the importance of Hegel's conception of language for his pre-systematic views on the nature of mediation. That Hegel also considered language as a critical mediating element in the development of consciousness in the *Phänomenologie* is apparent from the examination of the section on Consciousness. It is interesting to note, in conclusion, that the same can be said of Hegel's concept of alienation (*Entfremdung*). The role of language figures prominently in the only part of the *Phänomenologie* which deals with alienation as a specific cultural and social phenomenon. This section, entitled 'The World of Self-Alienated Spirit: Culture and its Realm of Actuality' ('Die Welt des Sich entfremdete Geistes: die Bildung und ihr Reich der Wirklichkeit'), is much longer than, for example, the vaunted 'Lordship and Bondage' passage, occupying a central position in the major part of the *Phänomenologie*, that of Spirit (*Geist*).[61]

In this section, Hegel deals with those types of *Entfremdung* that are manifested through the use of language among certain kinds of cultured individuals. He is not concerned with investigating the theoretical or practical origins of social institutions, as he was in his *Realphilosophie*, but with certain basic interpersonal situations where, ideally, a common universe of discourse exists. In this state of *Bildung*,[62] the individual experiences a different type of alienation from the theoretical one mentioned above; here the individual seeks to identify himself with, and gain recognition from, his fellow man by speaking out and expressing himself. Through the use of language, the individual asserts or projects himself into a certain social world; the language of the ego becomes the external embodiment (*Dasein*) of the ego itself. As Hegel puts it.

> Here, however, it (language) receives as content the form which it is itself, and is valid as *language*. It has the power of speaking as such, which does what has to be done. Language is in effect the existence of pure self as self. In it the self-oriented individuality of self-consciousness as such enters into existence, so that it exists for *others*. . . . Language . . . contains the ego in its purity; it alone pronounces the 'I' the 'I' itself.[63]

In this section of the *Phänomenologie* language takes on a social reality of its own; it comes to represent the actual medium for the various dialectical developments occurring at the level of Spirit. Hegel examines the conditions of alienation for the cultured individual by analysing the various types of languages he speaks, in particular, the languages of

flattery (*Schmeichelei*) and rupture (*Zerrissenheit*). The scope of this article precludes a thorough treatment of this section, but the close *practical* relationship between language and alienation in the world of social interaction portrayed here can be seen as an elaboration of the central role language plays for Hegel in the development of individual consciousness in its initial interaction with its world.

Notes

1 I refer here specifically to the following texts: 'System der Sittlichkeit', *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1913), pp. 419–503, writen 1802/3; 'Philosophie des Geistes', *Jenenser Realphilosophie I: Die Vorlesungen von 1803/1804*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1932), pp. 195–241; 'Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes', *Jenenser Realphilosophie II: Die Vorlesungen von 1805/1806*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1931), pp. 179–273. The titles of the latter two works as well as the names of the above sections are Hoffmeister's; hereafter, these will be cited as *JR*, I and *JR*, II respectively. Quotations from these two works, which were unpublished drafts of lecture notes of Hegel, will be cited exactly as they appear in Hoffmeister's texts. Rather than supply the necessary German grammatical ligatures or emendations, I have chosen to be faithful to the original text, since the meaning of Hegel's words is quite clear in the instances cited.

2 The most prominent examples of this group are: Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941); Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la phénoménologie de l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947); Georg Lukács, *Der junge Hegel. Über die Beziehungen von Dialektik und Ökonomie* (Zurich: Europa, 1948). Much of the recent interest in this area can be traced to the publication of the so-called '1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts' of Karl Marx. The relevant sections are found in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, trans. and ed. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), especially in 'Alienated Labor' (pp. 287–301) and 'Critique of Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy in General' (pp. 314–37) [translation reprinted in Volume I, pp. 163–81. R.S.].

3 For purposes of this article, three different uses of the word 'consciousness' (*Bewusstsein*) shall be distinguished. First, it will be used to refer to the first section of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* where 'the truth is for consciousness something other than itself'. This use of the word shall be capitalized to distinguish it from the two related following uses. Second, it refers to human consciousness in general as it undergoes development through Self-Consciousness, Reason and Spirit (these being the other three sections of the *Phänomenologie*, and hence also capitalized here). Finally, in this sense it will be used specifically (and often pejoratively) to refer to consciousness as it is described in Consciousness and parallel sections of other works of Hegel (for example, the *Enzyklopädie*), often preceded by 'natural' – i.e. *natürliche Bewusstsein*.

4 'Sprache und Arbeit sind Äusserungen worin das Individuum nicht mehr an ihm selbst sich behält und besitzt, sondern das innre ganz ausser sich kommen lässt, und dasselbe Anderem preisgibt,' *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1952), p. 229; hereafter cited as *PG*.

5 For the most recent and detailed chronology of Hegel's Jena writings, see Heinze Kimmerle, 'Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jenaer Schriften', *Hegel Studien* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1968), IV, 137–45.

6 *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. G. Lasson (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1967), p. 10. 'Into all that becomes something inward for men, an image or conception as such, into all that he makes his own, language has penetrated, and everything that he has transformed into language and expresses in it contains a category . . . so much is logic his natural element, indeed his own peculiar *nature*. If nature as such, as the physical world, is contrasted with the spiritual sphere, then logic must certainly be said to be the supernatural element which permeates every relationship of man to nature . . . and simply by so doing transforms it into something human, even though only formally human, into ideas and purposes.' *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), pp. 31–2.

7 *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), III, 150.

8 Wilhelm Dilthey points out this direct influence often in his work on the early Hegel. *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels und andere Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des Deutschen Idealismus* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1921), *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 28, 64, 70 *et passim*.

9 An excellent example of this is an excerpt that Hegel copied from Moses Mendelssohn's essay, 'Über die Frage: Was heisst aufklären?' As Hegel wrote it: 'Die Sprache eines Volkes ist die beste Anzeige seiner Bildung, der Kultur sowohl als der Aufklärung, der Ausdehnung sowohl als der Stärke nach.' *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: F. Fromman, 1936), p. 141.

10 This theme is implicit in 'Das Leben Jesu' (*Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Herman Nohl [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907], p. 114), and is developed at length in 'Der Geist des Christenthums und sein Schicksal', where Hegel undertakes an analysis of the religious language of Jesus and John to show that 'the Jewish Culture [*Bildung*] . . . was so poor in spiritual relations, that it could not appreciate the implications of their words'. Nohl, p. 305; *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings by Friedrich Hegel*, trans. T. M. Knox and intro. R. Kroner (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 255.

11 'It is true that this systematic understanding, this capacity to create a coherent picture of a world, depends on the creation of a language, which is the work, not of each man separately, but of many men able to communicate with one another. Language is the product of a community, and every man uses it to acquire knowledge both of an external world and of himself in that world.' John Plamenatz, *Man and Society* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), II, 198.

12 The editor of Hegel's earliest outlines on subjective Spirit (which includes empirical psychology) merely notes this ranking by Hegel as a curious fact, without spelling out any reasons for it. J. Hoffmeister, 'Hegels Erster Entwurf einer Philosophie des Subjektiven Geistes (Bern, 1796)', *Logos*, XX, 2 (1931), 150.

13 'Essay on the Origin of Language', *On the Origin of Language*, trans. Alexander Gode and John H. Moran (New York: F. Unger, 1966), pp. 142–3.

14 Hegel takes this position in a short discussion about the need for alleviating pain by crying out and thus 'objectifying' it. Pain, though utterly subjective, is projected out, thus benefiting those pained (for example mourners) and preventing them from being engulfed in their own despair. This release can occur only through oral means, not visual ones. 'Ein Gemälde tut diese Wirkung nicht. Er [*sic*] sieht nur, aber bewegt sich nicht selbst. Die Rede ist die reinste Form von

Objektivität für das Subjektive. Sie ist noch nichts Objectives, aber doch die Bewegung nach Objektivität.' *Dokumente*, p. 262.

15 *On the Origin of Language*, p. 145.

16 '[L]anguage, from without, is the true differential character of our species as reason is from within. . . . [L]anguage appears as a natural organ of reason, a sense of the human soul.' ibid., pp. 127–8.

17 'Precisely because human reason cannot be without abstraction and because no abstraction can be performed without language, it follows that in every people language must of necessity contain abstractions, that is, must of necessity be a copy of the power of reason by which it was used as a tool.' ibid., p. 159.

18 'Excellent how this new, self-made sense of the mind is in its very origin again a means of contact! – I cannot think the first human thought, I cannot align the first reflective argument without dialoguing in my soul or without striving to dialogue. The first human thought is hence in its very essence a preparation for the possibility of dialoguing with others! The first characteristic mark which I conceive is a characteristic work for me and a word of communication for others!' ibid., p. 128.

19 Hegel characterizes this theoretic level as consciousness' 'ideale . . . Herrschaft gegen die Natur'. *JR*, I, 197.

Some of the material in this section was taken from a paper given at the 14th International Congress of Philosophy in Vienna, September 1968.

20 'Das Bewusstsein als diese existierende Mitte seines Begriffs ist daher nur *Zeichen* überhaupt, worin ein Angeschautes, als ein aus seinem Zusammenhange Gerissens, als auf ein Anderes bezogen gesetzt wird, aber ideell, dass es noch in Wahrheit in seinem Zusammenhange besteht; die Bezeichnung ist seine ausser ihm seinde Idealität und diese ist selbst ein Bestehendes, *ein Ding*, unendlich darin, das aber eine andere Bedeutung hat, als es ist *gesetzt als ein Anderes, als es für sich ist* [my italics], zufällig für das, dessen Zeichen es ist. für sich nicht mehr es selbst seiend.' *JR*, I, 210.

21 *JR*, II, 180–2.

22 ibid., 183.

23 Hegel even uses the word *Arbeit* in describing this theoretic activity. ibid., 186, 187, 188, *et passim*. Actual physical labour is discussed much later in this draft.

24 'Durch den Namen ist also der Gegenstand als *seiend* aus dem Ich herausgeboren. Dies ist die erste *Schöpfer*kraft, die der Geist ausübt. Adam gab allen Dingen einen Namen. Dies ist das Majestätsrecht und erste Besitzergreifung der ganzen Natur oder das Shaffen derselben aus dem Geist. λόγος [ist] Vernunft, *Wesen* der Dinge und Rede, *Sache* und *Sage*, Kategorie. Der Mensch spricht zu dem Dinge als dem *seinigen* und lebt in einer geistigen Natur, in seiner Welt, und dies ist das *Sein* des Gegenstandes.' ibid., 183.

25 *JR*, I, 219, 227.

26 These mediating factors (i.e. language, work implements etc.) are 'die Mitte . . . worin er [individual man or consciousness] sich von seinem wahren Gegensatze abscheidet, – *in der Sprache* von Andren, zu denen er spricht . . . Er ist als Tätiges. Diese Mitten sind . . . die Mitte, oder wie es genannt wird, das Mittel, wodurch, *durch welches* hindurch er gegen ein Anderes tätig ist.' ibid., 205. Marcuse does briefly mention this active, mediating role of language, in his exposition of 'Hegel's First System'. Marcuse, pp. 75–6.

27 *JR*, I, 207.

28 'But the substance of Nature and Spirit must have confronted us, must have taken the shape of something alien to us, before it can become our *object*. . . .

The alienation [*Entfremdung*] which is the condition of theoretical erudition [*theoretischen Bildung*] . . . require[s] . . . the . . . pain and strain of the imagination which is occupied with something not given in immediate experience, something foreign.' 'On Classical Studies', trans. R. Kroner, Appendix to *On Christianity*, pp. 327–8. The above title of the speech is the translator's; the German text consulted is Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke* (20 vols; Stuttgart: F. Fromman, 1927–30), III, 240.

29 'Die vorhergehenden Potenzen [Sprache, Arbeit, Anerkennung] sind überhaupt ideale; sie sind erst existierend in einem Volke; *die Sprache ist nur als Sprache eines Volkes, ebenso Verstand und Vernunft.* Nur als werk eines Volks ist *die Sprache die ideelle Existenz des Geistes*, in welcher er sich ausspricht, was er seinem Wesen [nach] und in seinem Sein ist. Sie ist ein Allgemeines, an sich Anerkanntes, im Bewusstsein aller auf dieselbe Weise Widerhallendes; jedes sprechende Bewusstsein wird unmittelbar darin zu einem andern Bewusstsein. Sie wird ebenso ihrem Inhalte nach erst in einem Volke zur wahren Sprache, zum Aussprechen [dessen], was Jeder meint.' *JR*, I, 235.

30 Hegel expressed this view often concerning the state of his native language during his stay in Jena, occasionally in rather strong language: 'In *seiner* Sprache reden, ist einer der höchsten Bildungsmomente. Ein Volk gehört sich. Die Fremdartigkeit bis auf die lateinischen Lettern hinaus!' *Dokumente*, p. 369.

Hegel's sense of mission for German philosophy was the result of such a feeling. In a letter to J. H. Voss, Hegel says that he 'shall try to teach philosophy to speak German'. Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 314.

31 'Die Sprache wird also auf diese Weise in einem Volke rekonstruiert, dass sie als das ideele Vern [ichten] des Äussern [viz. nature] selbst *ein Äusseres* ist, das vernichtet, zu dem, was sie an sich, ihrem Begriffe nach ist.' *JR*, I, 236.

32 ibid., 235–6.

33 'Arbeit und Interaktion: Bemerkungen zu Hegels Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes', in *Natur und Geschichte: Karl Lowith zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Hermann Braun and Manfred Riedel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), pp. 132–55 [translation reprinted in Volume II, pp. 558–81 R.S.].

34 Marcuse can also be cited, among others, as an example of this approach, though he stresses the element of interpersonal conflict in these writings. Marcuse, pp. 74–7.

35 Habermas, p. 140.

36 'Diese drei dialektischen Grundmuster sind heterogen: Sprache und Arbeit als Medien des Geistes lassen sich nicht auf die Erfahrung der Interaktion und der gegenseitigen Anerkennen zurückführen.' ibid., p. 140.

37 'So ist Interaktion von eingelebten sprachlichen Kommunikationen abhängig.' ibid., p. 145.

38 '[D]ie dialektischen Grundmuster der Darstellung und der Arbeit [können auch] mit der Dialektik des sittlichen Handeins auf *einen* Nenner gabracht werden. Denn dann kann das Verhältnis des namengebenden und des arbeitenden Subjektes zur Natur ebenfalls unter die Figur des gegenseitigen Anerkennens gebracht werden.' ibid., p. 148.

39 '[D]enn sie [die Einheit des Bildungsprozesses] besteht ja vorgängig in der Dialektik jenes Sich-im-Anderen-Erkennens, in der nun auch die Dialektik von Sprache und Arbeit mit der Sittlichkeit konvergieren kann: unter identitätsphilosophischen Voraussetzungen sind sie nur zum Scheine heterogen.' ibid., p. 149.

40 Habermas, pp. 134, 135, 150, 153, *et passim*. For example, 'Geist ist die Kommunikation Einzelner im Medium eines Allgemeinen, das sich wie die

Grammatik einer Sprache zu den sprechenden oder wie ein System geltender Normen zu den handelnden Individuen verhält.' ibid., p. 135.

41 *PG*, pp. 79–129; cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (2nd rev. edn; London: Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp. 149–213; hereafter cited as *PM*.

42 *PG*, pp. 141ff.; cf. *PM*, pp. 229ff.

43 Foreword by Walter Kaufmann (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969). J. Loewenberg, in his running commentary on the *Phenomenology* (*Hegel's 'Phenomenology': Dialogues on The Life of Mind* (La Salle, Illinois; Open Court, 1965)), duly notes the use of word-plays and linguistic expressions by Hegel in his arguments in 'Sense-Certainty' and 'Perception'. Nevertheless, he does not examine systematically the role of language in the *Bildungsprozess* of Consciousness or treat the problem of the relation between knowing and acting or theory and *praxis* as do the writers discussed in this paper.

44 ibid., pp. 8–9.

45 ibid., p. 39.

46 ibid., p. 44.

47 It is not our purpose here to present or defend the actual three arguments, but merely to stress the significance of language for Hegel at the first stages of consciousness.

48 'Die Sprache aber ist, wie wir sehen, das Wahrhaftere.' *PG*, p. 82; cf. *PM*, p. 152.

49 '[I]n ihr [language] widerlegen wir selbst unmittelbar unsere *Meinung*, und da das Allgemeine das Wahre der sinnlichen Gewissheit ist und die Sprache nur dieses Wahre ausdrückt, so ist es gar nicht möglich, dass wir ein sinnliches Sein, das wir *meinen*, je sagen können.' *PG*, p. 82; cf. *PM*, p. 152.

50 'Die [those who speak of particular things] . . . sagen aber, . . . auch selbst unmittelbar das Gegenteil dessen, was sie meinen, – eine Erscheinung, die vielleicht am fähigsten ist, zum Nachdenken über die Natur der sinnlichen Gewissheit zu bringen.' *PG*, p. 88; cf. *PM*, p. 159.

51 *PG*, pp. 86–7; cf. *PM*, p. 158. Loewenberg (pp. 37–9) does generally discuss the comic quality of the predicament of consciousness in 'sense-certainty', but never relates it to any practical, non-epistemological considerations as even Hegel himself does in this section.

52 'Will ich aber dem Sprechen, welches die göttliche Natur hat, die Meinung unmittelbar zu verkehren, zu etwas anderem zu machen und so sie gar nicht *zum Worte kommen* zu lassen', *PG*, pp. 88–9; cf. *PM*, p. 160.

53 '[K]ann es erlaubt sein, die Rücksicht auf das Praktische zu antizipieren'. *PG*, p. 87; cf. *PM*, p. 158.

54 *PG*, pp. 135ff.; cf. *PM*, pp. 220ff.

55 *PG*, pp. 87–8; cf. *PM*, p. 159.

56 Both Loewenberg and Jean Hyppolite (*Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (Paris: Aubier, 1946), 2 volumes), for example, ignore this excursus into the practical dimension in their running commentaries on the *Phenomenology*. There is another one in Consciousness (which is also ignored by them) on the nature of punishment and revenge in the third section entitled 'Understanding', *PG*, pp. 122ff.; cf. *PM*, pp. 204ff.

57 *PG*, p. 96; cf. *PM*, p. 171. In this citation and hereafter, changes have been made in the Baillie translation.

58 *PG*, p. 96; cf. *PM*, p. 171.

59 *PG*, pp. 119–20; cf. *PM*, pp. 200–1.

60 For further elaboration upon this theme especially in other, later sections

of the *Phänomenologie*, see Daniel J. Cook, *The Role of Language in Hegel's Philosophy* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm, 1969).

61 *PG*, pp. 350–76; cf. *PM*, pp. 513–48.

62 The word *Bildung* has, of course, many connotations; throughout this paper it has been used in its most general sense, meaning development, constitution, formation. Its use in the subtitle of this section of the *Phänomenologie* refers, however, to a specific notion of culture or civilization, betraying certain characteristics (for example alienation, individualism). Hegel's concept of *Bildung*, in this specific sense, is mentioned throughout his writings.

63 *PG*, p. 362; cf. *PM*, p. 530.

Hegel on representation and thought

Willem de Vries

I

The classical and symbolist theories of mind

According to H. H. Price,[1] there have been two major approaches to understanding what it is to have a concept: the classical theory and the symbolist theory. The classical theory, whose heritage extends at least to Plato, takes having a concept to be a relation to a special sort of *object*, usually called a *concept* or *universal*. The kind of relation the thinking mind has to this object is most often conceived as analogous to sight, a version of the classical theory which Price calls *inspectivism*.

Opposed to this rich tradition stands the more radical approach of the symbolists. On this approach, having a concept consists in possessing a certain ability, in particular the ability to engage in *symbolic* activity. 'The symbolist philosophers, when *they* talk of concepts or abstract ideas, treat them not as inspectable entities ("objects of thought") but as dispositions or capacities. To possess a concept, they tell us, is just to have the acquired capacity for using one or another sort of general symbol.'[2] The symbolists take the basic sense of having a concept to be dispositional, a disposition acquired (at least in the case of simple concepts) by abstraction from an original occurrent encounter with an instance of the concept through sense experience. Employing the concept is a later actualization of such a disposition. Those who take images as primary and words as secondary symbols that must be understood in terms of the primary symbols (Price cites Berkeley) are called *imagists;* those who take words to be the primary signs or symbols with which we think Price calls *nominalists*.[3] Neither of these approaches to understanding the nature of thought commits one to a representational view, i.e. the view that thought is to be understood in terms of the thinker's possession of

an inner representational system which bears some semantic relation to the world.

Non-representational symbolism has been given a spirited defence by Ryle. But once one says that thinking is overt symbolic activity, the move to admitting that there is also covert symbolic activity within an internal representational system seems irresistible, given the variety and richness of intelligent human activity. The pressures on the classical view to posit an internal representational system, however, seem not nearly so strong, since the relation to the universal which defines this approach can be variously interpreted and need not be thought of as a relation to an internal representation of the universal. Figure 1 roughly sketches the possible positions and gives some putative examples in each category.[4]

	Representationalist	Non-representationalist
Classical theory	Possessing a concept of A = Standing in some relation R to an inner representation of A. (Plato, Descartes)	Possessing a concept of A = Standing in some relation R′ to A itself. (Russell and Moore in their realist period)
Symbolist theory	*Imagist*: Possessing a concept of A = Having the ability to image A. (Berkeley) *Nominalist*: Possessing a concept of A = Being able to use mental word 'A'. (Hume, Geach).	Possessing a concept of A = Being able to behave appropriately towards A and the absence of A. (Ryle, Skinner).

Figure 1

The classical inspectivist and symbolist theories of thought are too narrow to account straightforwardly for the full range of thought; each has a different area of strength. The classical theory is more suited to an account of our thought-about abstracta, while the symbolist theory seems specially suited to our thought-about concreta. When I think about what I had for dinner, it seems implausible to claim that I am inspecting a universal or concept, and much closer to the truth to say that various images, visual and gustatory, or various words, such as 'omelet', 'potato' or 'sauerkraut' are flashing through my mind, and that my thinking consists in the rehearsal of these symbols and the adoption of different attitudes or behaviours towards them. On the other hand, the idea that mathematical thinking consists in the inspection of or insight into the nature of pure intelligible entities has long had a (perhaps surprising) power to it.

Hegel made a studious attempt to reconcile and do justice to the truth in each of these theories by incorporating the strong points of each into a highly structured theory of mental activity.[5] Contrary to what one might expect, Hegel rejects the classical representational theory of Plato and Descartes and unites symbolic representationalism with classical non-representationalism.

Problems with symbolism

The symbolist theory maintains that thinking is *nothing but* the rule-governed manipulation of symbols or signs. But even at first blush only the *knowledgeable* or *intelligent* (though not necessarily conscious) manipulation of symbols could be plausibly identified with thought, and that seems either circular or regress-generating.[6]

Hegel's predecessors often did not exploit fully the possibilities of their position. All to frequently they slip into talking as if the simple possession of a symbol, its mere presence before the mind, is sufficient to constitute having the appropriate concept. The lure of the classical, relational picture of concept possession is evident in this tendency. This view is made plausible by the idea that there is a set of natural symbols which wear their meanings on their sleeves, namely, the symbols for simple concepts. Simple concepts were supposed to be intelligible independently of any other concept, even in isolation from all others, and were represented in the mind by non-coventional symbols either generated by perception or already innate. If the symbolist then forgets that he or she takes the dispositional sense of concept possession to be basic, the occurrence of the thought and the occurrence of the symbol seem identical, making it easy to infer that the thought and the symbol are identical. Such a view leads towards the possibility of having a concept by having present to the mind a symbol which is not connectable in any way with any others. Conflating concept possession with the simple presence to mind of a symbol results in a very poor theory of thinking and one particularly inept at dealing with self-reflection, for it abandons the essential symbolist insight into the active nature of thought.

Hegel strongly attacked this weak but popular form of symbolism. Since symbol and concept are identified, mental activity seems to be decomposable into various distinct operations upon symbols – thinking, remembering, imagining, etc. – and the unity of conceptual activity as such gets lost. Rather than engaging in one complex activity with many essential components, we seem only to engage in assorted simple activities. Thus, Hegel complains, thinking becomes just another faculty of mind alongside others.[7] Furthermore, the content of thought then appears to be without intrinsic connection – a set of individual, discrete universals.[8] From the weak symbolist point of view, any connection between two concepts must appear totally contingent; necessary, intrinsic connec-

tion between concepts must be impossible, for there are no necessary connections between symbols. Such a conception of thinking condemns all thought to being incapable of containing the Truth.[9]

Hegel does maintain, however, that all subjective thought is tied to symbol and sign manipulation. We think *in* words, he says;[10] whenever we think, the thought is embodied in a sign or symbol.[11] The thought *is* not the sign or symbol, but rather is at work through the sign or symbol.[12] Thinking expresses itself in the *use* of a sign. When we think about thought, we think about what is at work in the symbols or signs that are presented to us.

Problems with the classical theory

Classical theories claim that thinking consists in the mind's standing in some relation to a *universal*. But how, then, can we think about individuals? The answer must be that we have no such contact with them qua individuals.

Attempts by classical theorists to explicate the *nature* of the relation between mind and universal have not been very successful. The metaphor of seeing has dominated such attempts.[13] Inspectivism is a child of substantialist theories of mind, theories in which the mind itself is reified as an entity related to its objects in the way a person perceiving physical objects is related to them. Inspectivism, like symbolism, is threatened with either circularity or a regress, for, as Kant saw, perception itself involves thought and therefore relation to the universal. Hegel puzzled over how an individual mental entity could represent a universal:[14] a representational version of classical inspectivism seems to boil down to the obviously inadequate theory that there are signs the mere presence of which to mind constitutes possession and exercise of a concept, a theory Hegel rejects, as we have already seen.

Hegel does not completely reject the classical theory, however. How and why he thought it had to be salvaged is revealed by his understanding of the problems of representationalism. The idea of a non-representational symbolist theory of mind was entirely foreign to him: the existence of internal symbols in imagination and memory he took to be patent. So Hegel considered symbolism to be committed to representationalism. Yet he believed representationalism entailed certain consequences which condemned it as a final answer about the nature of thought.

Problems with representationalism

Hegel was well aware of the pressures within any representational theory of mind that tend to cut the mind off from external reality, keeping it trapped behind a veil of ideas. For whatever semantic relation is supposed to exist between our representations and their objects, its veridicality

must remain for ever beyond our ken. If this worry is taken seriously, even our self-knowledge is threatened.

Epistemological scepticism and the problem of the thing-in-itself are vitally linked for Hegel. Both are often motivated by entirely separating the subjective from the objective world to be cognized, by adopting a picture of the mind as an inner space populated with merely subjective representations.[15] But then, since we have access to our representations only, we cannot independently ascertain whether they are indeed veridical representations or whether there is any relation at all between our representations and any other reality. We cannot even ascertain whether they are correctly characterized as representations. The Kantian answer to such empiricist scepticism, the division of knowledge into possible phenomenal and impossible noumenal knowledge, Hegel took to be a sham. Knowledge that is not knowledge of things as they are is not knowledge at all: Kant's theory is just another form of scepticism, according to Hegel.

Purely representational theories of mind, Hegel believed, condemned one to subjective idealism, an intolerable position in which he thought Kant was mired. Hegel did not reject representationalism wholesale, for he believed that as a theory of perception and the lower cognitive functions that involve sensory elements (intuition and *Vorstellung*), representationalism had to be the correct answer. There needed to be a non-representational anchor for our mental activity, however, which would ensure that our knowledge is of things as they are in themselves.

Hegel's rejection of representationalism in order to escape subjective idealism depends upon his other metaphysical positions. In particular, his claim that the *universal*, and not the individual, is the substance of the world is crucial. We cannot have other actual individuals in our minds; this is why our dealings with such individuals in perception, imagination etc. is representational. But the idea of having universals themselves in the mind has not equally seemed to be impossible. Often enough it has been claimed that this is the only place they exist. It is our knowledge of the universal – the object of pure thought – that is non-representational and fully objective, according to Hegel; because the universal is the in itself of the world, we are not condemned to subjective idealism, but rather know things as they are in themselves. Hegel does admit that we *can* represent universals to ourselves (and do so in art and religion), but to do so is not yet to have achieved true thought. In true thought we stand in a non-representational relation to the object of our thought, which must always be a universal. Thus we turn next to explicating the nature of the universal, the object of thought, and the nature of its relation to the thinking mind.

II

Hegel's attempt to reconcile representational symbolism and non-representational classicism revolves around his notion of a concrete universal. He believed that his predecessors had started off on the wrong foot by assuming an absolute distinction between individuals and universals. He attempted to overcome this rigid distinction by arguing that both the individual and the universal are to be reconceived as *moments* of a more complex, articulated unity, the concrete universal, or concept. For our purposes, his technical terms 'concrete universal' and 'concept' can be treated as one. His basic argument for reconceiving the world in these terms is that we are otherwise incapable of reaching a fully coherent conception of the world. That argument, however, is beyond our bounds here.

The active concrete universal

A concrete universal is different from the *abstract* universals which previous thinkers in the classical tradition took to be the object of thought.

> The universal of the concept is not a mere sum of features common to several things, confronted by a particular which enjoys an existence on its own. It is, on the contrary, self-particularising or self-specifying, and with undimmed clearness finds itself at home in its antithesis.
>
> (*Enc.*, §163)

An abstract universal is a tag which can be hung on things otherwise quite indifferent to it in order to sort them out; a concrete universal, on the other hand, must reach to their very hearts and afford an explanation of their being. An abstract universal is static and unchanging because it is dead, a mere sum of otherwise unrelated features. A concrete universal, however, is alive, dynamic and dialectical: it is essentially a part of a self-developing system:

> but also *a* concept is, first, in its own self *the* concept, and this is only one and is the substantial foundation; second, *a* concept is *determinate* and it is this determinateness in it which appears as content: but the determinateness of the concept is a specific form of this substantial oneness, a moment of the form as totality, *of that same concept* which is the foundation of the specific concepts. This concept is not sensuously intuited or represented; it is solely an object, a product and content of *thinking*, and is the absolute, self-subsistent object, the logos, the reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things.
>
> (*WL*, I, 18; *SL*, 39)

The foremost characteristic of a concrete universal is that it is *active*. The whole universe is the realization of a universal activity, and this activity *is* the concrete universal. Its mode of action is teleological, that is it is self-realization; the concrete universal is both cause and effect: it is self-developing. Second, a concrete universal is the *truth* of those objects it characterizes and animates. It is their essence, that which explains what they are and why they behave the way they do. Third, a concrete universal is not separable from its instances, but actively manifests itself in and through them. Fourth, concrete universals, concepts, have an essence of their own, *the* concrete universal, which realizes itself in the active self-realization of its contributory moments. Concrete universals are essentially parts of a self-realizing system.

Hegel attributes a self-constituting activity (like that of the Kantian self) to every concrete universal, to all concepts. Any unity of a manifold which is not actively involved in the very nature of the elements, while also constituting its own self in the activity, is to that degree a merely abstract universal. What ultimately *is*, according to Hegel, is a universal self-constituting activity which becomes self-conscious in our knowledge of it – the Absolute.

The rejection of inspectivism

It is Hegel's ontology that allows him to break away from representationalism and the classical tendency towards inspectivism, for at the highest level of pure thought, he believes, the concept is not an inert entity we inspect, but is rather the activity we *are*. Instead of standing apart from a universal or a representation that we somehow 'look' at, in pure thought we become a special *realization* of the concrete universal, and realizing a concrete universal is not the same as representing it.[16] Hegel ultimately transcends representationalism, abandoning a common assumption shared by most philosophers, at least since Descartes.

Hegel takes thought to be a certain distinctive and dynamic, structured activity. He is a symbolist to the degree that he holds that this activity must be realized as symbolic activity in a subjectivity, but he refuses to identify thinking with any specific set of symbolic activities; he also refuses to say that the action upon the symbols is itself symbolic. Rather, Hegel insists that when we are thinking, the symbols themselves, the representations before the mind, are inconsequential. What really counts is what we do with the symbols. The activity actually operating upon the symbols – for which the symbols are but 'pieces in a game' – is thinking. This activity is not, of course, a kind of action performed by some homunculus upon inner symbols. Rather, the activity is implicit in the symbols themselves; they are symbols for concepts by virtue of participating in a system of demands and permissions, and in this sense they are codes which directly invoke activity.[17] While Hegel would admit that symbols are not

the things they symbolize but only representations of them, he would not say that the system of demands and permissions which govern the interactions of the symbols (in veridical thought) is only a representation of the demands and permissions which govern the interactions of the things symbolized.[18] Real thinking, which, according to Hegel, is always veridical, is achieved when our internal symbol system is governed by the *same* rule system as the world. Thinking is to be identified with the instantiation of this rule system; our ability to think true thoughts about the world is based upon the fact that we instantiate the same rule system that governs the world.[19] In philosophy this rule system also becomes the object of our thought, not by our symbolizing it to ourselves, but by our self-consciously participating in the system, self-consciously playing the game. Thus Hegel rejects a representationalistic reading of thought, rejects inspectivism, and synthesizes the symbolist and classical theories through the claim that in thinking the active universal is present in our symbolic activity.[20]

Notes

1 This distinction is taken from H. H. Price, *Thinking and Experience* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1953), though perhaps loosely.

2 ibid., p. 309. Hegel and Price both use 'symbol' and 'sign', but whereas symbols for Hegel have some natural connection with what they symbolize and signs do not, it is just the reverse for Price. This terminological matter should not bother us.

3 While lately there have been few advocates of the classical view – Gödel and Church, perhaps – the symbolist tradition is clearly dominant, especially in the cognitive sciences. Within the contemporary debate no one would adopt a pure imagist position, but there is considerable controversy over the forms mental representation might take and the possible role of images and natural language words in thinking. See Ned Block, ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), vol. 2, or Ned Block, ed., *Imagery* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1981), for a representative sample of positions.

4 The examples are meant only to be suggestive; each of these thinkers is too complex to be adequately characterized in this simple chart.

5 I use 'mental activity' here to signal that my concern is with Hegel's theory of what he calls 'subjective thought'. Hegel distinguishes subjective thought – what goes on in the minds of individual thinkers – from objective thought – the working of reason in the world at large. See *Enc.*, §§24 and 25.

6 This is a relative of what Daniel Dennett calls 'Hume's Problem' (*Brainstorms* (Montgomery, VT: Bradford Books, 1978), pp. 102, 122). There are two answers that symbolists give to this problem. The answer given by Dennett, Fodor etc. avoids the regress/circle by analysing intelligent capacities into complexes of *less intelligent* capacities. Ryle, on the other hand, replies by giving an adjectival analysis of intelligence: doing *X* intelligently of knowledgeably is not doing *two* things concurrently, namely, doing *X* and thinking about *X*, but is instead a

matter of *how* one does *X*. Both these strategies cut the regress/circle; the most satisfactory theory might combine them. For evidence that Hegel noticed this problem, see *Enc.*, §455, though I find no evidence that he saw either of these ways out of the problem.

7 *Enc.*, §20.

8 ibid.

9 *Enc.*, §25. We shall return to his reasons for this below when we examine his critique of representationalism.

10 *Enc.*, §462.

11 ibid., *Zusatz*.

12 ibid.

13 For a sustained critique of visual metaphors in epistemology and the philosophy of mind, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

14 The section of the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* entitled '*Vorstellung*' traces the stages in which our mental representations become increasingly universal in content.

15 Rorty (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*) also criticizes this inner space metaphor at length.

16 This is one of the points of his discussion of thought in §§20–5 of the *Encyclopaedia*. Only in this way can we make good sense of his distinguishing between objective and subjective thought while maintaining their identity. This also explains why philosophy or thought is the *self-movement of the concept*, which we, as it were, simply observe *Enc.*, §238, *Zusatz*; also *Wissenschaft der Logik*, II, pp. 485–8; *Science of Logic*, pp. 824–7).

17 In Douglas R. Hofstadter's popular book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), a distinction is drawn between inert and active symbols. Hofstadter, along with other contemporary symbolists, insists that active symbols are spatio-temporal entities and in the final analysis their interaction is to be explained causally. Hegel, in effect, would deny that such symbols are physical entities (according to him, they are like mental utterances) and would probably even more strongly deny that their interaction is to be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry. The interaction of such symbols must be explained entelechially, as being the fulfilment of a *telos*.

18 Otherwise, he would have to deny the identity of subjective and objective thought.

19 Hegel sees the world as the interplay of concrete universals. But thinking is precisely that: an interplay of concrete universals. He distinguishes objective thought and subjective thought, the only difference between them being their venue and mode of realization. Objective thought is realized everywhere; subjective thought is realized within individual subjectivities (through their symbolic activity). But Hegel insists on the identity of the two forms of thought.

20 I have had helpful criticism from numerous people, most importantly W. Sellars, A. Baier, W. E. Kennick and Jay Rosenberg, as well as the members of the Propositional Attitudes Task Force: Murray Kiteley, Jay Garfield, Chris Witherspoon and the late Herb Heidelberger. My thanks to them all.

Ethics and Politics

Freedom and social categories in Hegel's ethics

Terry Pinkard

Interpretations of Hegel are legion. It has been said (not wholly in jest) that there are as many readings of Hegel as there are readers of Hegel. One of the problems to be faced in an interpretation and evaluation of Hegel's thought is how to formulate exactly what issues Hegel thought his philosophy to be resolving and relating those issues to more contemporary concerns. This can be done either by showing that the issues which Hegel found troubling are similar to or identical with those that trouble us; or by showing that Hegel's troubles should be our troubles, that we are in some sense myopic in a way that an understanding of Hegel (even if we reject his own proposals for solutions) would correct.

I wish to do something like this with regard to Hegel's ethics by evaluating his theory in terms of its being a successor to Kantian ethical theory. Now, one way of doing this would be careful comparison of the Kantian and Hegelian texts, raising issues such as whether or not Hegel, for example, really understood the Kantian concept of universalization in ethics. However, I want to propose a slightly different approach. Kant's philosophy gave rise to various schools of Neo-Kantianism, each of which saw itself as carrying on the Kantian programme (or what was essential to it). Those people from Riehl to Rawls understood and understand themselves as continuing the Kantian programme while improving on it in certain ways. What I propose is that we see Hegel's theory as Hegel himself did, both as a continuation of the Kantian categorial-explanatory programme and as a genuine and plausible alternative to Kantianism,[1] but with a similar eye to that the Neo-Kantians cast towards Kant: to see how one might consistently read the Hegelian theory with an eye to putting it in place to offer proposals to contemporary philosophical troubles.

My strategy in doing this will be to stress the ways in which Hegel's ethics departs from Kantian ideas in order to evaluate Hegelian theory

as a corrective to Kantian theory. Given the resurgence of interest in the 'Neo-Kantian' style of ethical theory these days, a rereading of Hegel along these lines might offer some insight into a plausible reading of Hegel's notoriously difficult ideas. I shall not make any close comparison with Kant's texts at all, since that would make this paper unnecessarily long, and it is not necessary for the task at hand, which is ultimately a comparison of types of theories, not of texts. In particular, I shall focus on how Hegelian ethical theory differs from Kantian ethical theory in the following ways. I shall examine, first, the way in which Hegel locates the freedom of the will not in the will's giving itself a law but in the types of objects of the will; second, the way in which Hegel interprets the principle of respect for persons differently from Kant; third, the way in which Hegel extends the Kantian *categorial* programme to social and political philosophy; finally, I wish to close with some general comments on Hegel's theory of the state. Although I shall not make any detailed comparisons of the Hegelian and the Kantian conceptions of the last point, I hope to show how Hegel's different understanding of the principle of respect for persons has positive consequences for a theory of the state.

1 THE IDEA OF FREEDOM AND RESPECT FOR PERSONS

The basic concept for Hegel's ethics – like that of Kant's – is freedom. The *Philosophy of Right* is an articulation via dialectical argumentation of what the ontological and institutional conditions for freedom would be.[2] Both Hegel and Kant are concerned with explaining the possibility of freedom. However, whereas Kant's explanation rests on the idea of the will's legislating for itself, Hegel's proposal is much different. Treating freedom at first, as Kant does, as a problem of the will, Hegel defines the will in the following way: 'The will is . . . particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e., it is individuality. It is the self-determination of the ego . . . it determines itself and yet at the same time binds itself together with itself.'[3] Hegel tries to clarify this in another remark: 'Every self-consciousness knows itself (i) as universal, as the potentiality of abstracting from everything determinant, and (ii) as particular, with a determinate object, content and aim.'[4] I would parse this as saying that the will has objects of two types: (1) straightforward desires for this or that thing (particularity); (2) second-order evaluation of those straightforward desires according to norms and values (universality).[5] Hegel's claim would then be that only when our straightforward desires (the particulars) *coincide* with our *evaluations* of what would be good and right to desire (the universal) is our will truly free.[6]

Passages in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* reinforce this line of interpretation. When the 'will's content' is 'immediate', i.e. is a

simple object of straightforward desire – a 'want', as it might be called – the 'will is then free only *in* itself . . . it is not until it has itself as its object that the will is for *itself* what it is in itself', i.e. free.[7] The immediate will is, in Hegel's words, arbitrary.[8] If being free is doing what one wants, then one must have some criteria for selecting what one wants. However, if 'wants' are only our 'impulses and inclinations',[9] then no criteria of selection can be given, since many wants will conflict with one another. We can want to do both X and Y, but X and Y may be mutually exclusive. Hegel thinks that this leads us into the contradiction between saying that we are free (we do what we want, i.e. X) and yet unfree (we do not do what we want, i.e. Y). In part, this is Hegel's criticism of a hedonic (or utilitarian, if one wanted to restrict that term to its Benthamite varieties) theory of rational choice. A rational choice on that view would simply come down to being a ranking of various desires on the basis of compossibility and intensity of desire. Such a view, if we can put words into Hegel's mouth, rests on a conflation of two notions of 'want'. There is wanting in the sense of a straightforward desire for something; two wants may conflict in this sense of 'want' in that, for example, one may want to be in two places at the same time (as when a person wants to go to two different events at the same time). There is also wanting in the sense of holding something to be worth while, to be worth doing or experiencing or having; this is a want in the sense of an evaluation of our desires or of the world. The hedonic method of ordering our wants cannot supply us with a sense of this latter sense of 'want'. It cannot tell us which impulses and inclinations it is better to have; it can only tell us which of our wants are incompatible with each other. It cannot, to put it into Hegelian terms, tell us what the proper objects of willing are; it can at best provide us with a formally consistent system of wants. It is this latter, evaluative system of wants that leads one to the realm of values, of reason.

The dialectical solution to the apparent contradiction found in locating freedom at the level of simple wants (i.e. without bringing in a system of evaluations) is to modify the framework of description as has been indicated and see that 'the impulses should become the rational system of the will's volition'.[10] The freedom of the will cannot then consist of a simple ordering of the various wants of a person into an ordering of consistency and compossibility; it must consist in something more. This something more will be, as we shall see, the willing of proper objects of the will. To locate our desires within a framework of evaluations would be to do two things: (1) it would be to *idealize* them,[11] in Hegel's sense, to render them intelligible by locating them in a rational moral framework; (2) it would also be to make them *my own* desires, rather than ones that are 'external' to me. (Both of these are aspects of the same activity from the universal and the particular point of view, respectively.)[12]

It is in his theory of the freedom of the will that Hegel makes perhaps his most decisive break with Kantian ethical theory. Both Hegel and Kant utilize the same abstract description of the freedom of the will, viz. that of the will making itself its own object, or of the will willing itself. They both offer a criticism of the hedonic theory of the freedom of the will and opt for the determination of the will by reason. For Kant, however, this is to be interpreted as the will acting according to its own *idea of law*. This is basic to the Kantian idea of autonomy: the notion of freedom is to be equated with the idea of *self-legislation* (of auto-nomos). The will is free in Kantian theory when it is able to prescribe to itself which *rule* will determine its action. (I realize that this obscures the distinction of hypothetical and categorical imperatives, but that distinction is not important for the present exposition.) Because of this view of what constitutes the freedom of the will, Kantian ethics is ultimately an ethics of *rules*, that is of which rules and which relations of rules adequately capture the moral quality of the free will. For Kant it is the move from hypothetical to categorical imperatives that constitutes the move from 'wants' to 'reason'. Hegel's alternative, i.e. 'speculative', explanation sees the freedom of the will as residing not in the *rules* which the will gives itself but in the *objects* of the will. When the will wills a proper object, it may be said to be free, rather than when it simply gives itself to its own law or 'rule'. I shall not go into any depth here concerning Hegel's well-known criticism of Kant on these grounds; it is the by now familiar claim (and one that Kantians have always denied) that Kant's rule-orientated ethic must remain an empty formalism, that it cannot provide any content to the will. A rule which is universal enough to express a universal demand of reason in Kantian terms cannot possibly give any specific content to willing. Hegel's proposal, to which we shall come shortly, is to hold that content can come to the will only by means of categories, in something like the Kantian sense of them; just as there are categories of theoretical reason, there must – if the will is to have any content – be in Hegel's view categories of practical reason. Kant's view, as we might reconstruct it, was that such practical categories would undermine the autonomy of the will, since the categories which are found in theoretical reason are simply the logical forms of judgment synthesized with a form of sensibility (time). Since the categories are thus dependent on experience, to argue for practical categories would make the will dependent on forms of experience and thus not autonomous. The will must be formal, on Kantian terms, if it is to retain its autonomy. Hegel's speculative approach to categorial philosophy allows him to sidestep this Kantian hesitation. Categories are justified as explanations of the possibility of other categories – specifically, they are justified if they show how an apparent contradiction between lower-level categories is to be avoided – and not just as explanations of the possibility of experience. Reason on

its own can deliver content by virtue of its speculative function; it does this not by spinning the categories out of itself but by showing how one set of categories explains the possibility of other sets (the categories themselves are reconstructions from experience; Hegel never holds that reason simply produces them ex nihilo.[11]).

For Hegel, the will is free when it wills according to its nature – when it wills its proper object. The Hegelian theory will be concerned therefore with a theory of the proper objects of the will rather than with the relations among rules. This gives the Hegelian theory a completely different look from any type of Kantian theory. Kantian theories typically are concerned with the deductive (and other formal) relations among rules; among the standard concerns of Kantian theory is the search for some single moral truth – such as the categorical imperative – or some minimal set of moral truths along with some objective and formal procedure with which one can derive the other moral truths. One would search in vain for any such theory in Hegel's writings. Hegel's theory will be a theory of what *are* and what *are not* the fully proper objects of the will. His contention will be that this cannot be given (1) outside of a theory of what kinds of basic social categories there are; (2) outside of the concrete mores and ethos of a culture. The proper objects of the will will be these *evaluations* or ideals; it is because of this, as we shall see, that *only* a doctrine of social categories and the mores and ethos of a society can provide the will with a proper object.

Because of his break with Kantianism in his understanding of freedom, Hegel is able in an important way to break also with Kant's understanding of the principle of respect for persons. To be a *person* for Hegel is to be awarded a certain *status*;[14] it is not merely to be a *human* (an organism) but to have a 'capacity for rights' (*Rechtsfähigkeit*).[15] This status also implies that the person is free (in the Hegelian sense).[16] 'Hence the imperative of right is: "Be a person and respect others as persons." '[17] This only sounds like a Kantian claim. To be a person is not the same thing as prescribing to oneself rules to determine one's will; it is to be a self-conscious, rational, free agent – that is an entity capable of acting in accordance with a will that has the proper objects as the objects of its willing. On a plausible reading of his texts, Kant seemed to identify respect for persons with respect for their autonomy, since it was the capacity for moral autonomy that was the morally significant thing about them. In fact, this was the very criterion for their being moral persons at all.[18] On this reading, therefore, Kant identified respect for dignity with respect for autonomy. However, Hegel did not – and on the basis of his theory need not – identify respect for the *person* with respect for all the persons' *choices*; respect for dignity and respect for free choice will not be the same on the Hegelian view. His rejection of this Kantian identification of respect for autonomy with respect for persons has

important consequences; it gives Hegel a basis for his criticism of social contract theory (to which Kant himself subscribes, holding that the social contract is a regulative Idea of reason). If the state is construed as the result of choices that people make, then it becomes a kind of voluntary *association*, a club as it were, from which perhaps some people may be arbitrarily excluded by the wishes of the members of the club. (I shall discuss this in greater detail in section 4 below).

Respect for persons is, however, only an 'abstract right' in the sense that it does not specify what counts as respect. It does, however, apply to all those entities who satisfy the criteria for being persons.[19] Personhood then is not merely a descriptive category but also an *evaluative* one. To describe something as a person is to locate it within the moral world, that which the practical mind (or, in Hegel's terms, objective mind) produces. In Hegel's world, it is to idealize it.[20] To be a person then is minimally to have abstract rights which concern what is necessary to respect one's personhood. Thus, the abstract rights (the classical natural rights) appropriate to personhood are independent of the particularity of individuals. Moreover, Hegel believes that the basic injunctions of 'abstract right' are *negative* in character: 'Do not injure personhood and what is entailed by it.'[21] This is a significant move in Hegel's theory; he does not argue that we should produce more of the basic quality of personhood, nor does he make any kind of maximizing claim about persons. Rather, he is content to make the negative claim that one must not destroy or injure personhood (as an abstract duty). More important, Hegel does not convert the claims of abstract right into demands to respect the *choices* of people *per se*, but only to respect their personhood and avoid injuries to that.

2 MASTERS, SLAVES AND MORALITY

The arguments about personhood rest on more general considerations not provided in the *Philosophy of Right* about what would explain the possibility of such an acknowledgement of others as persons. These arguments are to be found in the 'Master–Slave' section of the *Phenomenology*; there Hegel makes the claim, as I understand him, that mutual acknowledgement (*Anerkennung*) of people as ends in themselves is possible only within a higher unity of *selves* and world. Hegel constructs his *phenomenology* of mind as an explanation of how it is possible that mind can *appear* as subjectivity in an objective world.[22]

Hegel's concern there is to delineate this structure of an I's act of self-consciousness where one of the elements in the world of which it is aware is another self-consciousness. In other words, it is to delineate what in the abstract having another person as the object of one's will entails.

Hegel makes the whole intersubjective context of human action and relating oneself to oneself turn on what it means to *acknowledge* other persons – in their feelings, in their freedom, and in their *status* as persons – and to have each person acknowledge oneself. He begins with the language of desire or appetite, a description of human wants and actions in terms of means/ends rationality and of satisfaction of one's *own* desires. He says that a description of oneself in this manner sees the object of desire as having 'no true reality',[23] meaning, I take it, that the object functions only as a means in the person's scheme of desires and thoughts. Indeed, the object can have no intrinsic worth; it is incapable of demanding any 'respect' on its own. Its worth can only be instrumental. It figures in the person's scheme only to fill some 'lack' of the person.[24] Hegel notes that, as construed, desire is 'destructive, and in its *content* selfish'.[25] The object of this type of simple desire can only be specified in terms of the person's own interests.[26]

The problem is that, at the level of desire, all objects have value only as means to my own ends. Yet when I confront another on the level of desire alone, I am confronting another person, not merely a thing. Hegel wants to say that there are contradictions here between (a) how I *must* confront the other, viz. as a person and how I ever *could* confront him or her given this framework of desire; (b) how at the level of desire each would be compelled to treat the other as a thing, 'natural and corporeal', while both as persons are 'completely free subjects and may not be treated as . . . merely natural things'.[27] The other as a person makes a claim on one, an *ethical* claim eliciting respect; at the level of desire, however, there is no place for ethics in this sense, because the kind of acknowledgement of each other which is a condition of the possibility of ethical strategies is necessarily lacking. This basic contradiction results in the dialectic of master and slave, which turns on the tension between the acknowledgement of the other as person (which is always there) and the refusal founded in the scheme of desire at which the confrontation between the two individuals operates. Each must attempt to subjugate the other, to compel the other to acknowledge him or her while withholding acknowledgement of the other. Each perceives everything in his or her practical field to be an instrumentality for him or her alone and perceives himself or herself to be the only end in itself in that field. But each also perceives the other to perceive him or her as only an instrumentality. To the extent that each is intelligible to himself or herself as the only end in itself and is aware of the other as making the same claim, each must live the contradiction and struggle with the other to get the other to cede that claim to be an end in itself. Either there is the death of one, or one person opts for life and surrenders his or her claim to full acknowledgement. This latter person becomes the slave and must work for the master; the slave, on egoistic grounds, yields to the other to preserve his or her

life – yields, that is, on egoistic grounds to being only an instrumentality in the other's world. But when the slave begins to *work* for the master, so Hegel thinks, a subtle transformation occurs. When the slave begins to work 'not in the exclusive interest of his own individuality, his desire is expanded into being not only the desire of this particular individual but also the desire of another'.[28]

This is a reconstruction of the way in which others *appear* in our world, viz. as embodied persons demanding mutual acknowledgement. We can reconstruct this appearance on several levels. At one level, we have a Hobbesian world of competing desires; the other person *can* serve only as another instrumentality in my world, as having no intrinsic worth. But that is to make the relations with others only a contingent one; we do not necessarily need the other. However, we actually do; we demand acknowledgement from the other. If I am the only non-instrumental value in my world, then my perception of another as holding the same view of the world (i.e. of being from his or her point of view the only non-instrumental value in the world – and he or she is perceived as living in the same world as mine) demands that we seek to abolish that other viewpoint, that the other person acknowledge me as the only non-instrumental value. At the level of desire, the contradiction between these competing claims cannot be resolved ethically, for there is no language in which an ethical solution could be framed. At best, we might strike an equilibrium, refusing acknowledgement to each other but coexisting. This coexistence, however, would and could be only an unstable one; there would be nothing except mutual threats to hold it in force. Even a Hobbesian sovereign to which we might cede our rights to independent self-determination would not work, for I could never (given the structure of desire) actually cede my right; I could only pretend to do so and wait for the right moment to reassert myself. In any event, an organization of life along Hobbesian lines could never allow for anything more than a non-intrinsic connection between people (a social, perhaps, but never a moral or political connection between people).

What we have at the level of 'desire' is a hypothetical situation which moves on two levels of 'goodness' but necessarily fails on its own to move on to a third and essential level. These first two levels would be: (1) *things* being good for a person and (2) a *person's* being good for others. This leads to the conflict which can only be resolved by forcing one of the people to accept being made into an instrumentality (being good) for the other. One is left with a dialectic of master and slave unless some provision for *mutual* acknowledgement is made, and this is impossible at the level of desire.[29] The third step must be from one's being good for others to a non-instrumentalist notion of one's goodness, of one's worth as an individual. Hegel calls this 'universal self-consciousness': awareness of ourselves as sharing a world with others, of being an ingredient in a

world of multiple perspectives, and of not having everything being good as a means to my own ends, i.e. awareness of ourselves as being non-instrumental goods and of others as being likewise so. Self-respect, which is the awareness of oneself as worthy of respect, is not enough; one must acknowledge the other as having an identical claim. Hegel creates an appealing imaginative fiction in which the slave, by hard work on things and by rationally transforming the world, gains this self-respect. The master, who has become dependent on the slave's work, must finally cede full acknowledgement to the slave. Both then mutually acknowledge each other as entities worthy of respect.[30] This is an appealing but not strictly necessary moment in the master/slave dialectic (although historically, this piece of imaginative fiction made a great impact on the imagination of at least one individual, namely, Karl Marx). This idea of universal self-consciousness translates into an awareness of reason, a set of objective (public), normative principles which both define and regulate our dealings with one another. The self posits itself as a *co-member*, as it were, of the moral world.[31] The unity of self and world is thus integrated into a higher unity of *selves* and world. It is a higher unity in that it is a more *complex* unity than that merely of self and world. At that level, the subjectivity of the other person makes only a problematic appearance, for it can appear only as the object of desire. The stage of universal self-consciousness, however, is the stage where each acknowledges the subjectivity of the other, that is the other's status as a person, not merely as simply one more object of desire. It is in fact the conceptual instability of the perception of each as object of desire and as self-conscious person that propels the move to the higher unity. In the dual structures (two people, A and B) of the higher unity, A is conscious of himself as being perceived by a person (B) conscious of himself as perceiving a person (A) conscious of (B's) perceiving him and *vice versa*. More important, though, than this complex structure of mutually interposed perceptions and self-perceptions is the higher unity of multiple people sharing a common world. (In this way, incidentally, Hegel can explain how the Kantian concept of respect for a person as a person is possible without having to invoke Kant's noumenal/phenomenal distinction.)

This conception of 'universal self-consciousness' is the forerunner to the Hegelian conception of the common good. The mutual acknowledgement of each other as worthy of respect is possible only within this higher unity. The content of this higher unity will be, as we will see, constituted in part by the ethos of a society, its 'ethical life' or *Sittlichkeit*. This makes up a common good: a unity which each constitutes that is higher, but which does not submerge the claims of individuality. The move to a higher level is a move to a true object of the will, to true freedom. At the level of desire, the will does not yet have its fully proper objects; the unity of itself and the world is incomplete. This higher unity on its own,

however, cannot give any *content* to the will; that will be the reason for the move into the doctrine of *Sittlichkeit*.

3 FROM MORES TO SOCIAL CATEGORIES

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel gives an account of a form of Kantian moral theory in a section labelled 'Morality'. There he argues that some version of Kantian morality must be assumed to explain how it would be possible for us to know the difference between right and wrong (it is the successor to the section on 'Abstract Right'). As Hegel reinterprets it, the Kantian theory argues successfully that the will must be free in order for morality to make any sense – indeed for there to be any sense to the concepts of right and wrong – but it cannot provide any objects of the will. The will, in merely willing its own universality in the form of rules, is left at the level of an empty formalism. The failure of the level of discourse in 'Morality' is the impetus for Hegel's move into what he calls *Sittlichkeit*. There is no single term in English which adequately renders what Hegel means by this. The meaning, as Hegel takes it, includes the mores, ethos and conventional morality of a particular society. One of his theses is that the content of individual morality must in some sense be derived from the mores, the ethos and the conventions of the society and culture of which the individual is a part. We must now look at his arguments for this claim, what he thinks is entailed by it, and how he understands its force.

The mores or ethos of a culture make up for Hegel the concrete moral world, the *Idea*. Hegel is not arguing for any simple-minded acceptance of every part of one's culture's ethos, nor is his thesis necessarily a conservative one. In order to understand it, one must set it against what I take to be Hegel's critique of the concept of moral autonomy, where autonomy is interpreted as *individual* self-legislation. If this is taken as meaning that the individual is the ultimate source and authority of his or her moral principles, and those principles are binding on him or her only if he or she chooses and/or accepts them, then, so Hegel argues, morality will turn out to be a paradoxical affair. Any attempt to describe our moral lives – i.e. our moral world – in such terms will contradict the basic concept of morality developed in the section of Masters and Slaves, viz. that we are answerable to objective demands whether or not we choose them. If the individual is to be morally autonomous in this sense, then ultimately something like his or her own conscience must be the final arbiter of what is right or wrong. This is, however, inconsistent with any adequate concept of moral objectivity. Hegel argues, 'conscience is therefore subject to the judgment of its truth or falsity, and when it appeals only to itself for a decision, it is directly at variance with what

it wishes to be, namely, the rule for a mode of conduct which is rational, absolutely valid (*an und für sich gültigen*) and universal'.[32] One requires *Sittlichkeit* to explain how the *objectivity* of morality is compatible with the *autonomy* of the person. At the level of discourse of 'Morality', one cannot distinguish one's private convictions from what is objectively morally good, yet the two are clearly distinct notions. As Hegel would say, the *subjectivity* of personal conviction is not enough to confer a *moral* status on one's principles; one must go beyond one's subjectivity to a notion of public, shared principles. This distinction can only be made if one brings in an understanding of accepted roles and practices. One cannot, for example, understand the moral claims of being a parent without some understanding of the *role* of the family in one's culture. One must look to the cultural world for concrete content for one's moral judgments.

However, why must these principles be the *actual* ones of a particular culture? Hegel's appeal to convention seems to have at least two components to it which he called the *moral* and the *interpretative* components. The moral component in the appeal to the mores of a culture rests on its being an appeal to a *moral consensus*. One is *prima facie* morally obligated, so the Hegelian thesis might be put, to give pride of place to the moral principles of one's culture rather than to one's own principles should they conflict. One has an obligation to act according to objective principles; since one cannot always be sure that one's own intuitions about those principles are correct, one has an obligation to check them against the judgments of others. Since the mores of a culture are the embodiment of others' judgments, one is therefore obligated to give pride of place to those mores. Hence, the appeal to moral consensus is not merely a simple-minded appeal to majoritarian feelings about what is right. It is an appeal to a content larger than one's subjectivity to provide a test of one's convictions.

The appeal to mores also has an *interpretative* component. In part, this was already alluded to by speaking of the moral necessity of going beyond the individual's merely private convictions. In order to understand a moral principle, such as 'give due concern to the welfare of others', one must appeal to the concrete institutions, roles and mores of one's culture: 'Because every action explicitly calls for a particular content and a specific end, while duty as an abstraction entails nothing of the kind, the question arises: what is my duty?'[33] I cannot understand what it means in this case to give due (not exaggerated, not too underplayed) concern to others without an appeal to the mores of my culture. To know what one *ought* to do, one must look to the way things *are* done. To give due concern to, for example, a grieving friend will be different from giving it to a complete stranger. It is not, moreover, simply a matter of making the correct conventional gestures to express some general moral principle; it

is to do what in specific circumstances *counts* a 'giving due concern'. Thus, Hegel claims, 'an immanent and consistent (*konsequente*) doctrine of duties can be nothing except the development of the relationships (*Verhältnisse*) which are necessitated through the Idea of freedom and are therefore *actual* in their entirety, to wit in the state'.[34]

The moral world (the Idea) is a complex set of principles, rights and duties which are like a 'second nature'[35] to the individuals living within it. It stands to the individual as an intersubjective, shared set of background principles which constitute the ethical *world* for that individual. Moreover this need not be a strictly conservative thesis, as if Hegel were saying that all conventional morality is fine as it stands or that one always has an obligation to obey and uphold all the moral conventions of one's culture, however grounded in vicious prejudice they might be. Moral argument and debate, so the thesis could be taken to mean, always proceeds within the ambit of a presupposed moral world, of a set of shared convictions. The arguments of reform will almost always turn on alleged inconsistencies *within* a moral framework, rather than being attacks on it from without.[36]

None the less, Hegel thinks that a *mere* appeal to convention is not enough. One must have some means of evaluation of the goodness and rightness of convention beyond an appeal to consistency. He may be seen to have two proposals for doing this. First, as the 'integration' (*Aufhebung*) of both 'Abstract Right' and 'Morality', it must preserve the general claims of those domains. Where it can be shown that a conventional understanding flouts, for example, the right to liberty that people have by virtue of being persons, or denigrates the notion of moral autonomy, then it is *prima facie* unjustified. The levels of 'Abstract Right' and 'Morality' offer *general* bases for criticism of any given conventional ordering, and it is always open for one to argue that alternative social arrangements might be better strategies for realizing these general values than existing conventions. This kind of appeal will itself involve an appeal to mores, but it is more than a mere appeal to make the existing conventions consistent; it involves a substantive appeal to rights and liberties, however general that appeal might be.

The second proposal is far more ambitious and involves what can be called the construction of *social and political categories.* Hegel himself never uses the term, but there is a definite set of concepts in his work which can be so labelled.[37] A social category (I shall use this term generally to include both social and political unities) expresses a certain type of *unity* between people; it is an explanation of how it would be possible that people are bound together in the moral world (the Idea) in certain basic ways which would realize basic ethical values, such as respect for individual dignity and freedom, along with promoting human flourishing. There are of course many different ways in which people in any society

are joined with others: churches, clubs, schools, associations, political parties and so on. These also (of course) vary from society to society. In calling something a social *category*, however, one is referring to some *basic* type of unity, which explains how the realization of basic moral ideals would be possible. It is clear that Hegel thinks that there are such basic types of unity between people. He speaks of the 'ethical order' (*das Sittliche*) as 'the system of these determinations of the Idea which constitute its *rationality*'.[38] The system's 'moments are those ethical powers which regulate the life of individuals'.[39] Individuals are the 'accidents' of this substance, 'and it is in individuals that these powers have their representation (*Vorstellung*), their form of appearance (*erscheinende Gestalt*) and actuality'.[40] In distinction from some humdrum empirical classification, a social *category* then is an expression of a basic form of unity among people – a structure of mutual acknowledgement – in which various moral principles (rights, duties and virtues) are embodied and which explains their possibility. Hegel calls it 'ethical substance'.[41] It is a *category* in the sense that it is a basic type of union for that culture and serves to explain the possibility of the realization of ethical ideals in that culture. Such categories both are the result of human interaction (they have their 'form of appearance and actuality' in individuals) and are independent of individuals in that the rights, roles, duties and virtues found in them are independent of the individuals choosing them.[42] For Hegel there are three such social categories: the family, civil society and the state.

These social categories not only provide content to general moral principles; they are also 'the living good'.[43] The 'substance' (social category) of such moral objects, of *Sittlichkeit*, 'is the good, i.e. the objective is filled with subjectivity'.[44] In the duties, rights, goods and virtues intrinsic to such unions, 'the individual finds his liberation'.[45] The articulation of such categories is thus the articulation of the Idea, of the moral world of a culture.

The social categories are the basic types of concrete acknowledgement (the Hegelian *Anerkennung*) between persons. They express the basic unities of selves and world in which members of a culture can and do acknowledge one another. A doctrine of social categories need not be (as Hegel's ethics is often popularly taken to be) a doctrine of totalitarian fusion of individuals into some organic whole, nor need it be a doctrine of some social or political authority compelling individuals to realize their true or non-corrupt nature. Rather, as a theory of the basic types of concrete acknowledgements between individuals, it is a doctrine of the basic types of *ethical relationships* we may entertain with others. Hegel thus stays true to his programme; rather than offer an ethical theory in terms of rules and principles, he is concerned to offer a theory of ethical relationships which explains the possibility of these concrete rules and

principles. These ethical relationships are the fully proper objects of the will. The theory thus takes a much different form from the one it would were it a theory of the former type. It does not present, for example, a basic principle in the form of a rule (like the categorical imperative) and then deduce other rules from it; rather, it presents an articulation of the types of social union (social categories) which provide the will with its proper objects.

More importantly, the social categories explain how human self-determination may be concretely embodied in types of social union, of reciprocal acknowledgement; the major Hegelian thesis is that these types of social union are therefore the concrete realizations of freedom. For Hegel, there is no such thing as abstract freedom. Our choices and our actions always appear against a given concrete background of desires and wants and values.[46] Freedom arises not when one does what one wants but when one can *will* it. In Hegel's words, 'the impulse should be the rational system of the determinations of the will (*Willensbestimmung*)'.[47] But for our various motivations (our desires, inclinations etc.) to become subject to such criticism, there must exist a background of intersubjective, shared standards; without this social background of mores and conventions, the freedom of the will could at best be sheer arbitrariness (*Willkür*)[48] and not true freedom. Without the types of social union out of which flow these various principles, this shared context of choice could not exist. Hence, so Hegel argues, these social unions are far from being restrictions on self-determination; they are the very soul of self-determination. As deployed in a philosophical theory, they explain how self-determination is concretely possible.[49]

What, however, are Hegel's criteria for deciding on the relative goodness of the specific conceptions of the right and the good found in the basic types of social union? On the one hand, any argument for the goodness of one type of conception over another must itself involve appeal to mores. It must involve appeal to accepted understandings of human motivation and so on. That is, it must be circular in the sense that it must use the culture's own concepts to criticize itself. This must be the sense of Hegel's well-known claim, 'whatever happens, every individual is a child of his own times; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts. It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age, jump over *Rhodes*.'[50] The spirit (*Geist*) of any culture consists of the ideas, norms, values and ideals in terms of which the culture understands itself and interprets itself to itself – what Hegel calls the self-consciousness of a culture. This includes things such as views about the proper relationship between men and women, ideals about the role of parents within the society, the place of a family in the larger social context, whether one should tip in restaurants, how one should

behave towards business associates, when it is appropriate to deceive – the list obviously can go on for ever. Without a doctrine of *Sittlichkeit*, no content can be given to the notion of free willing, for no objects can be specified for the will outside of these kinds of relationships.

However, each type of social category is an expression of a basic kind of unity among individuals which gives content to their willing. A theory of social categories explains the possiblity of the very general demands of 'abstract right' and 'morality' within a specific cultural setting. If Hegel had only a doctrine of *Sittlichkeit*, he would indeed be the cultural relativist that he is often popularly taken to be. His theory would come down to the claim that the content of willing comes from convention, and that no appeal to anything other than convention can be made. In one way, this is of course certainly a part of his claim. The theory of social categories offers, however, much more than that; it offers a kind of rational reconstruction of a culture, explaining what kinds of social union there must be if the culture is to recognize and embody certain abstract ideals. (Ultimately, it must also show what kinds of conceptual relationships exist between these kinds of social unions. Hegel's idea was that each category was the integration and unification of the categories preceding it, but to go any deeper into that part of his dialectic would be the subject of another paper.) This doctrine of social unions makes up the true core of Hegel's theory of freedom.[51] They form the true objects of the will; only from within such social unions can the individual find his or her freedom. Hegel's theory is, as was said, not a rule-orientated ethic but a theory of the kinds of ethical relationships that we have with each other. The social unions are the basic types of such relationships. They supply the will with its proper objects, and the theory of such categories is thus a theory of concrete freedom itself.

4 FROM THE STATE BASED ON NEED TO THE STATE

Probably no worse things have been said about Hegel's theory than about his theory of the state. If nothing else, it might be thought that this reading of Hegel in terms of a doctrine of social categories would lead to an unacceptable theory of the individual's relation to the state, where perhaps the state determines the proper objects of the will. However, I think that in the light of the preceding reading of Hegel, we may be in a position to appreciate better what is actually valuable in his theory of the state. We can see this by reflecting in a general way on what type of social union the state is and why Hegel thinks it is necessary to distinguish the *Notstaat*, the state based on need (what Hegel also calls the *Verstandesstaat*, the state as the 'understanding' conceives it) which appears in civil society, from the state proper.

The rationale for this transition may not, however, be immediately apparent. What, after all, does the category of the state explain that has not already been explained in the category of civil society? One has a fairly well-articulated conception of the state (the *Notstaat*, the state based on need) worked out in the section on civil society.[52] There Hegel argues that in the kind of market society which he claims would be found at the level of civil society, it would be necessary to construct at least a quasi-state apparatus in order to protect the orderly workings of the market and so on.[53] One even finds in the *Philosophy of Right* several sections devoted to the system of law and administration which would be found in the state based on need. Civil society is a social union based on the pursuit of self-interest; the glue which holds this type of union together is the belief on the part of each that this arrangement is the best workable alternative for pursuing his or her own self-interest. The *Notstaat* explains the possibility of this type of union (it is the result of considerations about what would be necessary for the securing of a basis for legitimate expectations and the like). Therefore, it is not, at least in Hegel's own eyes, incomplete in any simple or straightforward way.

Why then do we need yet a further category? One may (and many commentators have) indeed suspect a more sinister motivation for such a transition, viz. a desire for some all-encompassing organic nation-state with authoritarian (if not totalitarian) overtones. Some of Hegel's text certainly warrants such suspicion; for example, Hegel says of the state, 'On the other hand, this final end has supreme right against the individual, whose supreme duty is to be a member of the state.'[54] Those unfriendly to Hegel will be able to cite many other similar passages.

I have proposed that we see Hegel as rejecting both the Kantian doctrine of the freedom of the will as residing in the will's ability to give itself its own rule and the Kantian identification of the respect for persons with the idea of respecting the choices of others. The rationale for this would seem to be that once one has made the latter identification, one will be impelled to see the state as the result of some kind of contract or set of choices that individuals make. This, more than Hegel's view, has its sinister side: if the state is the result of a contract (and we think of contracts as bargains for mutual self-interest), then presumably people will want to include those in the contract that in some sense either provide some kind of benefit to them or are simply too dangerous otherwise to exclude. On that view, the state must become a kind of club which excludes certain people from membership. This will leave the powerless, the handicapped – in short, those who neither provide a benefit nor pose a threat – without protection. At best, one would end up with a state based on mutual protection, which is exactly what the *Notstaat* is. But the *Notstaat*'s justification lies in its claim to universality. As any agency set up by individuals in society, however, it must of necessity be a

particular organ, most likely an organ by which one group can press its interests on others who are too weak to resist. The contradiction which Hegel thinks impels the move from the doctrine of civil society with its version of the state – the 'state based on need' – is the contradiction between the *Notstaat*'s *claim* to universality and the fact that it can only be the organ of one group of interests (its particularity).[55]

The transition can be seen to be in part one from a social union whose focus is *economic* to one whose focus is *political*, that is from the concept of civil society as a set of people held together by the pursuit of the self-interest of each, with the *Notstaat* arising in order to maintain the orderliness necessary to such an arrangement, to the notion of a form of social union in which a *common good*, which is not simply the sum of various interests in society, can be recognized. In practice, of course, economic and political spheres intermesh, but it is the conceptual distinction between the two which Hegel may be seen to be making. The economic sphere is bonded together by market relationships, by the belief on the part of each that this arrangement furthers his or her own interests. The political sphere is a different type of union; in it people are not merely means to an end but are something like fellow actors in a political drama. Our relation to others in an economic sense is contingent (their place could in theory be taken by machines, for there is no intrinsic reference to *them* but only to their products or capabilities for production), but our relation to others in a political sense is not contingent in that way. Moreover, we could easily have (and there do in fact exist) states guaranteeing certain kinds of economic liberty while simultaneously denying political liberty. Economic rights and civil rights (those defining the extent of political participation) are not necessarily coextensive.

Hegel stresses this point in a passage immediately following the allegedly sinister one just cited: 'If the state is confused with civil society, and if its specific end is laid down as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, then the interest of the individuals as such becomes the ultimate end of their association; and it follows that membership of the state is something optional. But the state's relation to the individual is quite different from this.'[56] What exactly is this relation? Hegel's answer – '*Unification* pure and simple is the true content and aim of the individual, and the individual's destiny (*Bestimmung*) is the living of universal life'[57] – may be seen as just the kind of thing which I am claiming that he need not say. He might seem to be interpreting the *political union* of individuals as a kind of *fusion*, a reassertion of the type of unity peculiar perhaps to the family. However, there is no logical reason in his system which would compel him to do that. His major point is only that a political union is different from an economic one, not that it need be a fusion of some sort, and that political union explains something which social union does not.

What kind of union is it then, and what does it explain? A constitution is the locus of the authority which is the 'glue' of political union, a union in which some individuals gain authority (political power) over other individuals, not through market relations but through relations of justified authority. Such relations are constituted by individuals accepting certain rules and principles which give others the right, for example, to make binding laws for them (speaking of the constitution as 'the universal', Hegel says that it 'does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular knowing and willing').[58] The constitution both creates such relations and embodies them. It creates them in so far as it spells them out; it embodies, however, the accepted political relations in a society.[59] The (constitutional) 'state is the actuality of concrete freedom';[60] the constitution thus embodies the concrete ethical precepts of a specific way in which the Idea, the moral world, is articulated.[61] It is indeed accepted as having normative force for the society for which it is the 'determinate being', as it were, of authority. It embodies the ethos of a particular culture, the ways in which the abstract but none the less objective principles of abstract right gain a concrete embodiment. However these principles may be interpreted, they must find their place in the constitution of a country.

We may read then the passage on unification as the destiny of the individual as being that it is in the state that we have a full sense of the common good. A non-Hegelian example might help to clarify this a bit. We might distinguish contract, partnership, and the pursuit of a common good. A contract would be a bargain between mutually self-interested individuals; it expresses 'Abstract Right', the sense of liberal individuality. A partnership would be a joint undertaking between self-interested individuals with both the burdens and benefits to be distributed among them. One would find both partnerships and contracts in civil society, with partnerships entering at the level of the corporation and perhaps also at the level of the 'state based on need'. A pursuit of the common good, however, is more than a contract or a partnership. In it, people connect with a unity higher than that constituted by mutual self-interest. That unity of people which gives content to their ideals of mutual acknowledgement would be the concrete form of the universal self-consciousness of the 'phenomenology'. The common good is the systematic unity of the ideals of a society, the *Geist* of a given order. This *Geist* constitutes the way in which people understand themselves, understand the proper relations between various kinds of people – in short, the way in which the given culture is conscious to itself of itself. The freedom of the will consists in its willing the objects proper to it, and Hegel's theory of social unions is a categorial explanation of how it would be possible to have freedom in this sense. The principles found in the unions themselves constitute the concrete objects of volition which give the will its freedom.

Moreover, as products of the practical mind itself, they are not alien to the will. One wills the common good when one wills according to the ideals of these unions, and these unions can only be understood in terms of the ethos and mores of a given culture.

There is an ambiguity in speaking of the common good as something 'higher'. Space prevents any more than a brief sketch of how this sense of higher could be taken (to go into any great detail here would require another paper). The common good might be higher in the sense that its principles would always take priority over the principles that preceded it. Thus, the state would be a higher unity in this sense if, in any conflicts with principles arising out of 'Abstract Right' or 'The Family' or 'Civil Society', the principles appropriate to the state would take priority. This interpretation would certainly be consistent with the traditional way of reading Hegel, and, it must be admitted, would also find some support in Hegel's texts. The other way of taking it (the way which I would endorse) would be to see the common good as higher in the sense that it offers new content for willing but does not necessarily take precedence over the previous principles; the previous rights and duties are 'preserved' in the higher unity. This is one way of taking the Hegelian concept of *Aufhebung*, which I have rendered as 'integration'. The higher unity integrates the principles found at the lower level and supplies new content on its own. The principles at the lower level acquire new patterns of meaning by being integrated into the higher conception of the common good, but they do not vanish, nor do they necessarily lose in any conflicts with principles appropriate to the state.

This is, I think, a charitable reading of Hegel's theory of the state. It allows us to locate it within Hegelian ethical theory as it has been reconstructed here, and it allows us to see Hegel's alternative to Kantian theories of the state as consisting of more than merely an organic or non-individualist theory of the state in contrast to the social contract view to which Kantians (including Kant himself) were and are still drawn. This is only the outline of such a reading of Hegel's theory. Much more needs to be said, but if what has been presented here is plausible, then perhaps it will be worth saying.[62]

Notes

1 I have offered versions of this reading as it applies to the *Science of Logic* elsewhere. See Terry Pinkard, 'The Logic of Hegel's *Logic*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 17 (October 1979): 417–35; 'Hegel's Idealism and Hegel's *Logic*', *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 33 (April–June 1979): 210–26 [reprinted in Volume III, pp. 478–94. R.S.]; 'Hegel's Philosophy of Mathematics', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 (September 1980–June 1981): 452–64.

2 I understand dialectical argument in the following way. Dialectical philosophy

attempts to show that certain kinds of descriptions (what we may call levels of discourse) only have their determinateness (i.e. they only make sense) within a larger context of descriptions into which they are integrated (*aufgehoben*). Dialectical philosophy may indeed be seen as an extension of the idea of philosophy as the explanation of possibilities; the well-known procedure of the dialectic as showing the way out of contradictions is linked with this. What is important in dialectic is that it shows that certain categories are in apparent conflict with each other when they are formulated at a certain level of discourse but that at a higher level of discourse, one can explain how it is possible that the implicit claims of the lower-level categories are compatible. In other words, holding both categories or sets of categories may at first *seem* to be impossible, as they seem to contradict each other, but a dialectical argument shows that they are in fact compatible with each other, when viewed from the standpoint of an enriched framework of description. I have elaborated on these points more fully in the articles cited in footnote 1.

3 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 7. Although I use Knox's translation in this article, from time to time I alter it slightly for emphasis.

4 ibid.

5 This is not to be confused with the familiar distinction made by Harry Frankfurt between first- and second-order desires. Cf. Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and Concept of a Person', *Journal of Philosophy* 43 (January 14, 1971): 5–20.

6 Gary Watson has argued a similar thesis. See Gary Watson, 'Free Agency', *Journal of Philosophy* (April 1975): 205–20.

7 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 15, remark.

8 ibid.

9 ibid.

10 ibid., § 19.

11 Cf. ibid., § 7. The key moment of the concept of mind in Hegel's account is that of idealization. *Ideality* is 'the distinctive determinateness of the concept of mind' which is identified as the 'integration (*Aufheben*) of the otherness of the Idea'. *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1830) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1969), § 381 *Zusatz*. Hegel says, 'This integration of the externality which belongs to the concept of mind is what we have called the *ideality* of mind. All activities of mind are none other than different manners of reducing what is external to the inwardness which mind itself is, and it is only by this reduction, by this idealization or assimilation of what is external that it becomes and is mind' (ibid.). The metaphor at work here is one modelled on Kant's Copernican Revolution; in idealizing things, mind brings them within its orbit and *comprehends* them. It does not mean to see something only in terms of some vision of its perfection (as the English word, 'idealization', would seem to suggest).

12 About this second point: the person who is drawn by desires that he or she would rather not have (for example, an uncontrollable desire to steal or to do embarrassing things) is often said (and often describes himself or herself) as being driven by desires that are not really his or her own. How would this be possible? Since our system of evaluations makes up to a large extent our standpoint in the world (why else is idealization so important for Hegel?), it also defines in large part *who* we are. It is only when we are able to fit these desires into our systems of evaluation that we often feel that they belong to us, that they are part of who we are. Until then, we may feel ourselves to be driven by forces alien to us. The free person is one who is able to mesh his or her desires and evaluations – i.e.

able to do what he or she really wants. A theory of freedom must therefore be a theory of these evaluations and of which set expresses our nature as rational agents: it will also be an ethical and political theory, since it will be a theory of the social and political conditions for our ability to make concrete valuations. That is, it will be a theory of the moral *world*.

13 In the introductory paragraph to the section on the philosophy of nature in the *Enzyklopädie*, Hegel says, 'Not only must philosophy be in correspondence with our experience of nature, the *origin* and *formation* (*Entstehung und Bildung*) of philosophical science has empirical physics as its presupposition and condition' (§ 246).

14 ibid., §§ 35, 47.

15 ibid. The term is a legal one, and it is from this legal usage, I assume, that Hegel derives his own usage. The legal usage of the term has been explained in the following way: 'To be a person means to be capable of holding rights, i.e., to be *rechtsfähig*. The capacity to hold rights (*Rechtsfähigkeit*), which is enjoyed by all persons, must be distinguished from the capacity to enter into legal transactions (*Geschaftsfähigkeit*) and the capacity to be responsible for civil delikts (*Zurechnungsfähigkeit*).' E. J. Cohn, *Manual of German Law* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950): § 105.

16 Indeed, so Hegel claims, 'individuals and nations have no personhood until they have achieved this pure thought and knowledge of themselves', where this knowledge of themselves is specified as a knowledge of self, as 'self-relation', as 'purely self-identical', i.e. as 'something infinite, universal and free', ibid., § 35. This is, of course, another specification of Hegel's notion of mind as that which comprehends things and idealizes them, that is as 'infinite', not bound by anything except the limits set by its own rational nature. The concepts through which it organizes the world (into Idea) are bound only by the constraints of reason (of making sense) which are its nature; hence, it is not limited by an other (which would make it finite), but only by itself and hence it is infinite.

17 ibid.,§ 36.

18 Compare, for example, what Kant says in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 107: 'Our own will, provided it were to act only under the condition of being able to make universal law by means of its maxims – this ideal will which can be ours is the proper object of reverence; and the dignity of man consists precisely in his capacity to make universal law, although only on condition of being himself also subject to the law he makes.'

19 Compare what Hegel says in the *Enzyklopädie*, § 209: 'A person (*Mensch*) counts as such only because he is a person, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.'

20 This is again, it should be noted, using 'idealization' in its technical Hegelian sense. See footnote 11.

21 Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, § 38.

22 This is, at least as I take it, the systematic reason for its placement in the mature *Encyclopaedia* within the section on 'Subjective Spirit' and before the section on 'Objective Spirit'. It is another and infinitely more complicated issue to discuss the systematic place and role of the longer *Phenomenology of Spirit vis-à-vis* Hegel's other works.

23 Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, § 426.

24 ibid., § 427.

25 ibid., § 428, *Zusatz*.

26 Were the content to be one in which another's interests figured, then one

would have *altruistic* (or perhaps sadistic) desire. Hegel's passage from this notion of self-consciousness to the notion of consciousness of another person is not an attempt at demonstrating that my self-consciousness is possible only through mastery of, say, a public language that is shared by many self-conscious persons. He is not interested, as I understand him, in epistemologically proving the existence of other minds (although his view of things would involve some such conception of our knowledge of ourselves as possible only in terms of a larger world-knowledge which included conceptions of others). Rather, he is basically concerned with the *acknowledgement* of the other as a *person* and to show that this acknowledgement *cannot* be coherently phrased in the language of desire as a simple means/ends view of things.

27 Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, § 431, *Zusatz*.

28 ibid., § 435, *Zusatz*.

29 One can see another reason why Hegel would not accept social contract theory; it requires promises on the part of people and commitment to keep them, but that presupposes prior acceptance of the framework of morality. The notion of keeping a promise to another person or maintaining some kind of commitment to him or her is dependent on acknowledging that he or she is worth keeping promises to. It is significant that Hegel does not base his fundamental ethical considerations on acceptance of rules of any kind but on the more obscure (and perhaps more insightful) notion of the *quality of relationships* we have with others. Promises, commitment and the like only make sense when the other is perceived as *deserving* of such commitment. For Hegel, then, the question will become, 'under what sets of social and political conditions will this kind of acknowledgement be possible?' – for it is surely impossible in the state of nature and hence one could not get out of the state of nature by any contract, for the contract would presuppose some kind of social and political order in order to be intelligible.

30 This strictly speaking may not be true as a literal reading of the text. Rather, the move to mutual respect is the only way out of the dialectic of master and slave. Unless this move to mutual acknowledgement is made, the dialectic of master and slave remains like that of the 'bad infinite' in the *Science of Logic*. It oscillates from one to the other without ever resolving the contradiction. I have discussed Hegel's conception of the bad infinite in 'Hegel's Philosophy of Mathematics'. See footnote 1.

31 See Hegel's 'Self-contained Individuals Associated as a Community of Animals', *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 417–38; *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), pp. 285–300; the better translation is that by A. V. Miller, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 237–51.

32 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 137.

33 ibid., § 134.

34 ibid., § 148.

35 ibid., § 151.

36 For example, a vegetarian might object to the commonplace eating of animals within his or her culture by first appealing to accepting norms of not inflicting unnecessary pain and then arguing that it is therefore illegitimate to inflict such pain on sentient beings such as cows or pigs. Conventions can come under attack from the standpoint of other conventions.

37 This imputation of social categories to Hegel's theory has been made by Klaus Hartmann. I take the basic idea from his writings on it. See his 'Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View', in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alasdair

MacIntyre (New Jersey: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 101–24 [reprinted in Volume III, pp. 243–58. R. S.].

38 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 145.

39 ibid.

40 ibid.

41 ibid., § 146.

42 ibid.

43 ibid., § 142.

44 ibid., § 144, addition.

45 ibid., § 149.

46 ibid., §§ 15–19.

47 ibid., § 19.

48 ibid., § 15.

49 Hegel's point might perhaps be portrayed in a different way. The relation of the general claims of 'Abstract Right' and 'Morality' to particular moral and political choices is one mediated by the institutions and practices of the culture. A doctrine of social categories is in part the attempt to present how these abstract claims involving general obligations to avoid interferences and to provide benefits may be concretely phrased. They provide, that is, the interpretative framework by which concrete conceptions of these general claims may be articulated and concrete political strategies for realizing these claims may be worked out. A philosophical theory of social categories is in part an evaluation of how well the basic types of union in a given society offer rationally construable conceptions of what is right and good. How well do they embody abstract rights of personhood? How much do they contribute to human flourishing? How are they consistent with one another? A theory of social categories is not a mere enumeration of the ways in which one's own culture conceives of the proper organization of the world of value. It is an explanation of how those general conceptions are *possible* from within the standpoint of a concrete culture.

50 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 11: *Grundlinien der philosophie des Rechts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1962), p. 16.

51 Using a term from John Rawls, we can call these *social unions*, although we will not be using it exactly in his sense. Cf. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), § 79, 'The Idea of Social Union', pp. 528–9.

52 See *Philosophy of Right*, § 183.

53 For an excellent account and criticism of Hegel's conception of the *Notstaat*, See Günther Maluschke, *Philosophische Grundlagen des Verfassungsstaates* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1983), pp. 237–47.

54 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 258.

55 I think that one could read this as an anticipation (and rebuttal) of Marx's later criticism of Hegel's theory of the state. To go any further into this idea, alas, would exceed the bounds of this paper.

56 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 258.

57 ibid.

58 ibid., § 260.

59 ibid., § 274.

60 ibid., § 260.

61 Cf. ibid., §§ 273–4.

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The emptiness of the moral will

Allen W. Wood

§ 1 INTRODUCTORY

It is well known that Hegel contrasts the 'Moral standpoint' or 'morality' (*Moralität*) with the higher standpoint of 'social ethics' or 'ethical life' (*Sittlichkeit*), and that he regards Kant's ethical theory as an expression of the moral standpoint. Hegel finds many shortcomings in the moral standpoint, but probably the most famous of Hegel's criticisms of Kantian moral theory is the charge that Kant's theory is an 'empty formalism', incapable of providing any 'immanent doctrine of duties,' (*PR* § 135R).[1] The Kantian moral law, says Hegel, has no content; its only criterion of morally right action is non-contradictoriness, and that proves to be no criterion at all, because it is a criterion which even the most immoral actions are able to satisfy (*PhG*, para. 431, *EL* § 54).

The 'emptiness' charge, as I will call it, is usually interpreted as a criticism of Kant's first formulation of the moral law in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the formula of the 'universal law': 'Act only according to a maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' (G 421/39). Accordingly, the emptiness charge is usually discussed in connection with Kant's four famous examples of allegedly immoral maxims which cannot be willed as universal laws of nature without contradiction. Philosophers have often been puzzled by these arguments, and wondered how Kant's 'universalizability' criterion is supposed to work. Some, such as John Stuart Mill, have even concluded that Kant fails to show 'that there would be any contradiction, any logical (not to say physical) impossibility, in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct'.[2] It has usually seemed natural to identify Hegel's emptiness charge with this criticism of the universal law formula.

Considered in this light, however, Hegel's emptiness charge is some-

thing of an embarrassment to any self-respecting Hegelian. The embarrassment is not that the universal law formula is straightforward and unproblematic in its application, but rather that Hegel's criticisms of the formula seem to rest on quite unsubtle misinterpretations of it. Hegel seems to interpret Kant as denying that we can appeal to any empirical facts at all in the course of moral reasoning. He seems oblivious to the most elementary points involved in Kant's application of the universal law formula, such as the distinction between its being impossible for a maxim to *be* a universal law and its being impossible for us to *will* that it is, and even the distinction between its being impossible (or impossible to will) that one person act on a certain maxim and its being impossible (or impossible to will) that all rational beings act on it. Hegel also represents Kant as committed to arguing from the universal law formula in bizarre ways to obviously false conclusions, for instance, as having to claim that it would be logically impossible for the institution of private property not to exist (*PhG*, para. 430, *PR* § 135R, *VGP* 3: 368–9/461, *NR* 462–3/77–8). Thus it is not surprising that as a rule recent scholars have concluded that Hegel's criticisms have no force against Kant on any plausible interpretation of the universal law formula.[3] Though there may well be difficulties in applying the universal law formula, Hegel seems so far from a correct understanding of the formula that he cannot be credited with identifying any of them.

Hegel's most familiar statements of the emptiness charge, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*PhG*, paras 429–37), the *Philosophy of Right* (*PR* § 135R,A), the Berlin *Encyclopaedia* (*EL* § 54,A) and the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (*VGP* 3: 366–9/458–61) are all quite brief: the longest is about five pages. None, moreover, is anything but a recapitulation of Hegel's first full statement of the emptiness charge, over ten pages in length, found in the 1802 essay *On the Ways of Treating Natural Right Scientifically* (*NR* 453–66/70–80). And that statement is the outcome of a period of intense critical reflection on the ethical views of Kant and Fichte which had begun in 1798, before the start of Hegel's university career at Jena. If we follow the development of these reflections, I think we will gain a picture of the emptiness charge and the motivations behind it which is quite different from the usual one. I think we will see that at bottom the emptiness charge is not really concerned with the universal law formula, or any other specific formulation of the moral law. At most the apparent 'emptiness' of the universal law formula serves in Hegel's mind to confirm a criticism he holds quite independently of any reflections on this formula. Instead, we will see that the real target of the emptiness charge is the Hegelian conception of the good will and the moral worth of actions.[4]

§ 2 KANT ON DUTY AND MORAL WORTH

Kant distinguishes an action which is merely 'according to duty' (*pflichtmässig*) from an action which is done 'from duty' (*aus Pflicht*). He insists that only actions done from duty have moral worth, and only such actions exhibit a good will, which is the only thing in the world or beyond it which can be called good without qualification (*G* 397–9/13–16; *KpV* 81/84; *TL* 389/50). To do an action from duty, Kant explains, is to do it out of respect for the moral law, rather than from any inclination or from any liking for the actual, expected or intended consequences of the action (*G* 399–401/16–17). And Kant makes it explicit that this entails that dutiful actions done from feelings of love and sympathy, though they may be fine (*schön*) and amiable (*liebenswürdig*), are devoid of moral worth every bit as much as actions done from mere self-interest (*KpV* 82/85; cf. *G*. 397–9/13–16). In the case of actions where both duty and inclination speak in favour of the same course of action, it makes an important moral difference for Kant whether we act from duty or from inclination. Kant holds that in such cases we need not forgo the satisfaction of our inclination, and we may even have their satisfaction as part of our *end*. But as far as our *motivation* in the act of doing our duty is concerned, we ought to 'abstract' (*absondern*) ourselves from all incentives of inclination, so as to act solely from duty, and not from inclination (*TP* 278–9/63–4). What makes the motive of duty or respect for the law wholly distinctive for Kant is that it alone is capable of determining our will *a priori* and independently of natural impulses. This means that it is only in actions done from duty that we exercise our freedom, our capacity to act autonomously as beings independent of and superior to the natural or sensible world (*KpV* 86–7/89–90).

Kant does not think that absolutely every action we perform must be done from duty, since he does not think that every action is even a candidate for moral worth. An action is a candidate for moral worth only if duty requires it, or if we look at its performance as a case of refraining from some other specific action which is contrary to duty. In many cases, however, we have a choice between two or more permissible actions, which we inevitably (and for Kant quite legitimately) make on grounds other than duty. Thus to want every one of our actions to have moral worth would be to want (in Kant's words) to 'strew all our steps with duties', a wish whose fulfilment, according to Kant, would turn the 'dominion' (*Herrschaft*) of virtue into a 'tyranny' (*TL* 409/71).[5]

Kant also does not think that in cases where duty bids us do something it is morally required of us that we act *solely* from duty. Instead, his view is that it is our duty to strive to make the thought of duty the sufficient motive of our will, and that we may fulfil this duty even if this striving is not perfectly successful.[6] But Kant does hold that perfect virtue, the

goal after which we do have a duty to strive, consists in performing morally lawful actions solely or purely from the motive of duty without the need of any cooperating inclinations (*TL* 391–2/52–3; *KpV* 84–5/87–8; *R* 30/25). For this reason, he says that all virtue is founded on 'apathy', the freedom from all affects which might interfere with the influence of the moral law on us (*TL* 407–8/70–1). Kant admits that people often need the cooperation of affects and inclinations if they are to act according to duty. But he sees this need, and those actions which are according to duty but done not purely from duty, as exhibiting the 'impurity' of the human will, the second of the three degrees of radical evil in human nature (*R* 29–30/25).

To some of his contemporaries, such as the poet Friedrich Schiller, Kant's views on these matters seemed unduly austere.[7] Schiller thought that the sublimest character was one characterized by 'grace' (*Anmut*), one whose inclinations themselves were so formed as to be spontaneously in harmony with morality. Accordingly, Schiller thought that a dutiful action performed by a person with grace, and motivated by a morally agreeable inclination (such as love), is even more worthy of admiration than the same action would be if the agent had to be self-constrained to it by the thought of duty. Self-constraint for Schiller lends 'dignity' (*Würde*) to an action, but dignity is a moral quality less sublime than grace.

Under Schiller's influence, the young Hegel criticized Kantian 'morality' (*Moralität*) in his unpublished 1798 essay, 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate'. In the spirit of Kant's *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, Hegel's early writings consistently attack 'positive' religion, religion based on authority rather than reason; and the 'Spirit of Christianity' begins with such an attack on the spirit of self-alienation and unfreedom attendant upon the positivity of Judaism, with which the spirit of Jesus is to be contrasted. But then in a striking passage Hegel goes on to turn the same criticisms against Kantian morality, and specifically against its opposition between moral reason and sensuous inclination. Hegel contrasts the victim of positive religion ('the Tungu shaman, the European prelate, the puritan') with the Kantian who obeys his own command of duty. Between the two, Hegel says,

> the difference is not that the former is in bondage while the latter is free; instead, it is that the former has his lord outside himself, while the latter carries his lord within himself and is in bondage to himself. In relation to the particular, to drives, inclinations, pathological love, sensibility, or whatever else you call it, the universal is necessarily and eternally something alien and objective; an indestructible positivity remains, which fills us with indignation because the content received by the universal command, as a determinate duty, contains the

> contradiction that it is simultaneously limited and universal. On account of its form of universality, it makes the hardest pretensions for its one-sidedness. Woe to those human relations which are not found directly in the concept of duty! For because it is not merely the empty thought of universality but must display itself in an action, this concept excludes or dominates all other relations.
>
> (*TJ* 323/*ETW* 211–12)

According to the young Hegel, genuine freedom and goodness of will are to be found in 'love', the spontaneous harmony of reason and inclination. In contrast with love, morality is 'hypocritical' or 'pharisaical'. It demands that we view our deeds reflectively as 'duties', disturbing the spontaneous harmony of reason and sense and thus rendering the spirit of the action impure; and then it falsely gives credit for the good deed not to the spirit of love through which it was done, but to the subsequent reflective thought of its conformity to duty (*TJ* 332–3/*ETW* 220).

§ 3 THE EMPTINESS CHARGE

'The Spirit of Christianity' contains the first statement of many criticisms Hegel will later bring against morality: its tendency to hypocrisy, its misguided criticism of actions in which agents satisfy their particular individuality, its fixation upon an 'ought' which can never be transformed into an 'is'. Notably absent from the list of accusations is the 'emptiness' charge. Yet at the end of the passage I have just quoted, Hegel comes tantalizingly close to the emptiness charge. For there Hegel takes it for granted that the moral law has a 'content' and commands 'determinate duties'; but he insists that the moral law contains an 'indestructible element of positivity' which 'fills us with indignation' because its 'content', while claiming 'universality', is 'limited' and 'one-sided'. What fills Hegel with indignation is the 'positivity' of this content, its arbitrary and unjustifiable inclusion of certain actions and human relations at the expense of others. But to say that the content of the moral law is 'positive' is not a far step from saying that any content given the moral law is arbitrary, and that the moral law, regarded simply as a law having 'universality of form', has no rational content of its own.

Hegel takes this further step in two of his earliest writings from the Jena period: *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801) and *Faith and Knowledge* (July 1802). In both essays, Hegel is orientated more to Fichte's moral philosophy than Kant's, but apparently believes that his criticisms apply equally to both. One striking feature of these criticisms is their close association with a Schillerian

attack on the Kantian–Fichtean opposition of duty to inclination. For Fichte, he says,

> 'We obey ourselves' means 'our natural inclination obeys our ethical law'. But in the aesthetic intuition of nature as the expression of the inner fullness and force of the body, there occurs no such separation of obedience as we find in this system of ethics. In this self-obedience we intuit natural inclination as bounded by a neighbouring reason, drive is subservient to the concept. The necessary viewpoint of this ethics, instead of being aesthetic, is exactly one which exhibits a distorted, anxious, oppressed form, or ugliness.
>
> (*D* 92–3/153–4)

Because 'the concept' is divorced from everything contingent, it remains only a 'formal concept', which is 'empty'; consequently, there is nothing to decide questions of duty except 'arbitrariness' (*Willkür*) (*D* 89/150).

Equally striking, however, is that in these criticisms it is quite clear that Hegel is *not* claiming that Kant and Fichte have unfortunately formulated their moral principles so that they happen to be empty of content.[8] Instead, he is claiming that no contentful moral principle is consistent with the Kantian–Fichtean conception of the morally good will. As Hegel says in *Faith and Knowledge*, 'the emptiness of the moral law' follows from the 'emptiness of the pure will' (*GW* 426/184). Hegel's basic complaint against Kantian–Fichtean morality is still that it divorces reason from sense, or (as Hegel likes to put it) 'universality' from 'particularity'. Only now the charge is that the Hegelian conception of the pure will so isolates the motive of duty from everything that is in any way contingent or particular that it leaves the moral law necessarily devoid of content.

The same idea is expressed quite clearly in the *Natural Law* essay of November 1802: Kantian practical reason, Hegel asserts, 'Is the complete abstraction from all material of the will; through a content, a heteronomy of the power of choice is posited' (*NR* 461/76). Only now (and henceforth), Hegel does as he did in the *Difference* essay and frames the emptiness charge as part of a more general critique of the Kantian conception of reason. Kant, he says, conceives 'practical reason' as an 'abstraction' from all 'matter' or 'content' of the will, having no content but abstract identity. Consequently, he says, Kantian morality has nothing but the principle of contradiction to serve it as a criterion. Hegel does not begin with Kant's universal law formula, interpreting (or misinterpreting) it as proposing non-contradiction as the sole moral criterion. Instead, he begins with the idea that Kantian–Fichtean practical reason consists in the autonomous ego conceived as 'the moment of pure unity' which aims at 'limiting and dominating sensibility' (or 'the moment of multiplicity') (*NR* 458/74); and then he argues that the autonomous self, so

conceived, contains merely 'an analytic unity', so that the only possible criterion available to it is non-contradiction (*NR* 460–76). It is only then, and in light of these conclusions about what criterion Kant has available to him, that Hegel interprets the universal law formula as demanding no more than that the content of the will should be non-contradictory (*NR* 459/76–7).

The emptiness charge, as we find it in Hegel's later writings, is simply an echo of this argument of the *Natural Right* essay. The Berlin *Encyclopaedia* derives the emptiness charge from the claim that Kant never successfully distinguishes reason from understanding, so that Kantian reason must always receive its content from outside, and supplies nothing but a formal unity to experience (*EL* § 52). And from this he draws the conclusion that non-contradiction is the only moral criterion Kant has available: 'For that which practical thought makes its law for the criterion of its determination within itself, there is again *nothing to hand* except the same abstract identity of the understanding, that there is no contradiction in the determination' (*EL* § 54, italics added). *The Philosophy of Right* criticizes Kant for remaining at the merely 'moral' standpoint of 'duty for duty's sake', and claims that from this standpoint the only 'determination of duty' is 'the lack of contradiction', a criterion which allows for the justification of even the most unjust and immoral actions. Only then does Hegel allude to what he calls 'the *further* Kantian form, the capacity of the action to be represented as a universal maxim'. Of this formula Hegel asserts that although it is a more concrete representation of duty, it contains no principle beyond the absence of contradiction (*PR* § 135R, italics added) Though this last claim may be false, its truth is not essential to Hegel's basic criticism, which is that a morality which makes the motive of pure duty the criterion of moral worth is not *entitled* to employ a principle with any content beyond the requirement of non-contradictoriness.

§ 4 HEGEL'S ARGUMENT

The question now is why Hegel should have thought this. Hegel's writings after 1802 unfortunately do not give us much help, since they either leave Hegel's reasoning on this point entirely opaque or else follow the *Natural Right* essay by subsuming it under the Hegelian slogan that Kant fails to distinguish reason from understanding. One difficult passage from *Faith and Knowledge*, however, perhaps provides us with a clue. This is the earliest text in which Hegel uses the term 'ethics' (*Sittlichkeit*) in the way characteristic of his mature writings, favourably contrasting it with 'morality' (*Moralität*). From the moral standpoint, he says,

> the content of the concept is some reality posited in an ideal form as end and intention, some empirical given; only the empty form is the a priori. . . . But a true ethics, namely a true identity of the universal and particular, or matter and form, are not thought of here. Because the emptiness of the pure will and the universal is the truly a priori, the particular is something absolutely empirical. What right and duty are in and for themselves – to give a determination of this would be contradictory. For the content at once cancels the pure will or duty for duty's sake, and makes duty into something material. The emptiness of the pure feeling of duty and the content continually cross each other up. . . . [Consequently], if we do not presuppose a true ethics, then since morality consists in form, we are free to elevate every moral contingency into the form of the concept and procure a justification and a good conscience for what is unethical.
>
> (*GW* 426–7/183–4)

Here Hegel seems to be claiming that if the pure moral disposition consists in acting from the pure thought of duty, then any 'content' would destroy the moral purity of the will. Or as Hegel puts the point later in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*: 'Since the *determinate* duty is an end, it has a content, its *content* is a part of the end, and so morality is not pure' (*PhG*, para. 630). Suppose, for instance, that I try to think of a certain kind of action, such as keeping a promise or helping another in need, as my duty. To do this specific duty, Hegel seems to be saying, would be to act not from duty alone, but also from a more particular motive, that of keeping *this* promise or helping *this* person. And that would cancel the purity of my will as it is conceived of by the Kantian. Hegel's contention is that to apply any determinate criterion of duty is to think of one's action as one's duty because it has certain determinate empirical features; and to perform it because it is a fulfilment of *that* duty is to perform it because it has *those* features. The point could also be put by saying that if there are to be determinate duties, then to act from duty is to act from those duties, and to act from those duties is always to act from empirical motives, motives other than the pure motive of duty. But this means that Kantians cannot allow themselves to apply any criterion of duty, since the use of such a criterion would mean that I am performing the action not merely from duty but also because it has whatever features satisfy the criterion. From this Hegel concludes that the moral standpoint precludes any objective criterion for moral action, and so is capable of procuring a good conscience for what is unethical just as much as for what is right and good.

To this argument there seems a very natural Kantian reply. To act from duty is to perform one's action because it satisfies the categorical imperative in one or another of its formulations. If promise-keeping is

entailed by some formulation of the categorical imperative, then to act from duty entails keeping promises, so that it seems not only possible but necessary to acting from duty that one perform acts with the empirical features which make them acts of promise-keeping. These empirical features are not the motive of the act, but it is a corollary of acting from the categorical imperative that one should perform acts with those features. If Hegel is already supposing that the categorical imperative is incapable of identifying the empirical features of actions which constitute conformity to duty, then he is just bringing up the emptiness charge on the usual interpretation, but without arguing for it.

This reply, however, misses the point of Hegel's criticism. For as we have seen, the point is not that the categorical imperative does not happen to have a content; it is rather that Kantians cannot employ contentful principles and perform contentful actions without compromising what they regard as the purity of their wills. Hegel's claim, in other words, is that to act from duty is necessarily to act from those empirical features which the act has, even if one derives those features from some moral principle. Further, his contention is that to act in this way is also to act from something which has the stamp of 'particularity' on it; it is to act from empirical inclinations, interests, drives, passions. To act from a contentful principle is always to act from empirical motives; and so the only way to avoid acting from empirical motives would be either not to act at all, or else to act in some determinate way (any determinate way will do) while thinking of oneself as acting from a principle with no content. Hegel's argument here is perhaps most explicitly stated in *The Phenomenology*: according to the moral world-view, he says,

> I act morally insofar as I am *conscious* of performing duty only, and not *something else*, and this means in fact *when I do not* act. When I actually act, I am conscious of an *other*, an *actuality* which is at hand, and of an actuality I will to produce; I have a *determinate* end and fulfill a *determinate* duty. There is something in it which is *other* than pure duty, which alone ought to be intended.
>
> (*PhG*, para. 637)

The crucial thesis here is that to pursue an end or act on a contentful principle is necessarily to act from something other than pure duty, that it is to act from empirical desires. This is a point Hegel often makes in a very abstract way by insisting on the unity or identity of the universal and the particular (*EL* §§ 163–4), or by claiming that the universal is actualized only in the particular (*VG* 85/72). As applied to moral psychology, this means that duty or the moral law ('the universal') can be carried out or actualized only through the medium of 'the particular' –

through the agent's empirical desires, drives and inclinations (*PhG*, para. 622).

Hegel suggests at least two quite distinct sorts of reasons for this thesis. Sometimes he appears to be making a point about human nature, the point that people are not in fact disposed to carry out substantial projects or realize rational goals unless they are driven to do so by 'interest' or 'self-satisfaction', or moved at the level of their sensuous nature by elemental drives or passions: 'Nothing great', he says, 'has ever been accomplished without passion' (*VG* 85/73; *EG* §§ 474–5, *PR* § 121). Such statements may have an air of worldly wisdom about them, and they may even be true; but they do not really go very deep or pose a serious challenge to Kantian morality. For if Hegel's claim is only that human beings are so disposed that they will in fact do nothing unless empirically motived, then that would not count as any sort of argument that moral worth should be accorded to empirically motivated actions, nor would it show that there is anything illegitimate in the moral demand that we should strive to act from the pure motive of duty alone. It would only confirm Kant's own suspicions, in his more cynical moods, that even the best human will is often impure in its motivation, so that perhaps none of our actions really possesses moral worth.

Sometimes, however, Hegel suggests that all action is mediated by inclination simply because every action has an end, and because the setting and pursuing of any particular end necessarily involves acting from empirical drives and inclinations. Recall the passage quoted earlier from *The Phenomenology*: 'Since the *determinate* duty is an end, it has a content, its *content* is a part of the end, and so morality is not pure' (*PhG*, para. 630). Or as he puts it much later in the Berlin *Encyclopaedia*:

> An action is an end of the subject, just as it is its activity of carrying out this end. There is an action at all only through the fact that the subject is in it, i.e. through its interest, even in the most unselfish action. . . . [According to some people] drives and passions are opposed as a whole to duty for duty's sake, to morality. But drive and passion is nothing but the vitality of the subject, through which it is in its ends and their execution.
>
> (*EG* § 475R)

Every meaningful action, Hegel maintains, is itself one of the agent's ends, since in our actions we seek to express and vindicate our own agency through the accomplishment of our other ends. But the vindication or confirmation of my agency is always an aspect of my particular good, my subjective interest or (as Hegel likes to put it) my 'self-satisfaction'. From this Hegel concludes that the ethical worth of an action is not in the least diminished by the fact that it is performed from inclination or

passion, since it is an inevitable fact about agency that this should be so. Instead, 'the ethical has to do with the content, which as a *universal* is something inactive, and has its activation in the subject. The fact that this content is immanent in the subject is interest, and when it lays claim to the whole of the effective subjectivity, it is passion' (*EG* § 475R).

This is an argument which the Kantian must take more seriously. For Kant himself holds that every action has an end or purpose, acts done from duty every bit as much as acts done from immediate impulse or prudential calculation. The Doctrine of Virtue even maintains that there are ends which are duties, ends which it is my duty to have, and that these ends play the chief role in determining our ethical as opposed to our juridical duties (*TL* 381/38). Thus Kant agrees with Hegel that there can be no application of the moral law, no specification of what our duties are, without the specification of the determinate ends of dutiful actions. Kant also holds that an act is devoid of moral worth if its motive consists in the agent's desire for the end of the action; acts so motivated are done from what Kant calls a 'material principle' – such principles, he says, are without exception empirical and fall under the principle of self-love or one's own happiness (*KpV* 21–2/19–20). An act whose motive coincides with its end is therefore necessarily heteronomous, done from inclination or self-interest and not from duty. If all acts were necessarily of this kind, then there could be no such thing as an 'autonomous act' in Kant's sense of the term, and the whole of morality would be nothing but a cobweb of the brain. If, as Hegel contends, there could be no act in pursuit of a specific end which does not take that end as its motive, then Kant would have to admit that no determinate duty could ever be carried out from the motive of duty.

But Kant thinks it is a mistake to suppose that the motive of an action inevitably coincides with its end. An act done from duty has an end, which sometimes even includes the satisfaction of the agent's inclination or particular interest. And of course Kant never claims that the agent has to forgo this self-satisfaction in order for the action to have moral worth. But this end, which Kant calls the 'matter' of the agent's maxim, is not the motive of an action done from duty; rather, the motive in this case is the 'legislative form' of the maxim, the fact that the maxim can be willed as a universal law (*KpV* 26–9/26–9).[9] If Hegel's emptiness charge is to be made out against Kant, then Hegel must show us what is wrong with the view that our pursuit of an end might be motivated not by our empirical attachment to its achievement but solely by the legislative form of the maxim on which we act in pursuing it. He must substantiate the claim that the act of setting and carrying out an end is necessarily an act of the agent's 'particularity', its empirical interests, inclinations or passions, and that such an act cannot be performed directly by the agent's legislative reason without their assistance or mediation. In short, Hegel

must show why Kant is wrong to think that pure reason can *of itself* be practical (*KpV* 41–2/43).[10]

§ 5 HEGEL'S THEORY OF MORAL ACTION

Hegel certainly did not succeed in doing this in the years 1798–1802, the period in which he was bringing the emptiness charge to articulation in his writings. Through most of his career, in fact, the most we find by way of argument on this point is its derivation from the dubious thesis of speculative logic that the universal is 'identical' with the particular and receives 'actuality' through it. Not until the Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia* of 1817 does Hegel begin to hint at a theory of moral action which might justify the claim that the setting and execution of a determinate end requires action from interest, inclination or passion (*EG* §§ 417–20). And it is only in the *Philosophy of Right* of 1821 that such a theory receives any real articulation. By this time, however, Hegel has ceased thinking of 'morality' merely as a nickname for a false or limited standpoint, or for the Kantian–Fichtean moral theory. Hegel has now developed his own standpoint of 'morality', with its own positive conception of moral agency and responsibility, the moral good and the morally good will. 'Morality' is no longer merely a false substitute for 'ethics'; it has come to represent one of the essential positive moments of modern ethical life.[11]

For the mature Hegel, the standpoint of morality is the standpoint of the free subject (*PR* §§ 105–6): the subject's task is to actualize itself by raising its particularity to universality, or, in more Kantian language, making its particular willing and action conform to the universal law of reason. For Hegel this conformity can be judged only with respect to deeds in the external world as an expression of my volition, and deciding how far that expression conforms to the standard of universality which it is my moral concern to actualize. From the moral standpoint, it must be determined which objective occurrences my will is responsible for, and then how far the relation of my will to these occurrences constitutes the actualization of the universal in my subjective volition.

Any deed of mine changes the external world in some way, or at least contributes to an indefinite multiplicity of factors which bring about such a change. But my will is morally responsible for what happens in the world only to the extent that the objective occurrences can be said to belong to my end (*Zweck*) (*PR* § 115). According to Hegel, they so belong to the extent that they lay in what Hegel calls my 'purpose' (*Vorsatz*) (*PR* §§ 117–18). The consequences of my action lying within my purpose depend on my representation or conception (*Vorstellung*) of the circumstances, 'those presuppositions which [the will] knew in its ends' (*PR* § 117). Hegel regards this as including all those consequences

which constitute 'the genuine immanent shape of the action' because they 'manifest its nature' (*PR* § 118R). Thus according to Hegel Oedipus was causally responsible for his father's death, which belonged to his deed; but he cannot be charged with parricide, because it did not lie in his purpose to kill his father, nor did parricide belong to the nature of his action of defending himself in the quarrel with the old man at the cross-roads (*PR* § 117A). Likewise, Hegel claims that a hunter who shoots in the darkness at what he thinks is an animal and hits a man may be guilty of manslaughter but not of murder (*VPR* 3: 338, *VPR* 2: 413; cf. *VPR*17 78). On the other hand, an arsonist is chargeable with the destruction and death which result when his fire spreads to buildings beyond the one he wanted to burn down, because the possibility of such a mischance belongs to the nature of his action (*PR* § 119A).[12]

Because the moral standpoint is the standpoint of the self-conscious subject, the moral judgment of my action is concerned not only with what I did and the fact that I knew what I was doing, but also with the subjective meaning my action had for me. And because my action is imputable to me as a thinking being in terms of my conception of what I was doing, moral judgment should focus on this conception, the 'universal quality' (*PR* § 120) or 'universal nature' of the action as I knew it (*PR* § 118A). This aspect of the action is what Hegel calls the agent's 'intention' (*Absicht*) (*PR* § 119). Hegel points out that etymologically, the word *Absicht* ('looking away') implies the abstraction of a particular side of the concrete deed (*PR* § 119R). Hegel therefore thinks that the agent's intention is the universal aspect of the action which constitutes its 'subjective essence' and explains *why* the agent did it (*PR* § 121). To put the point in a distinctly non-Hegelian philosophical jargon, the intention is the 'desirability characterization' of the action which exhibits its appeal to the agent. Or again, we could characterize the intention of an action as including all those features of it which constitute *reasons* this particular agent had for doing it, if by 'reasons' we mean 'internal' reasons, that is reasons which *explain* why the agent did what she did.[13]

Hegel's theory of moral action, then, concerns itself with what I did, whether I knew I was doing it, and the aspect or aspects of it which I intended.[14] The two main factors are what actually occurred when I acted, and my way of conceiving of those occurrences. It is striking that motivation proper plays virtually no role in Hegel's theory of action. This is because Hegel's theory of action in effect replaces motives with internal reasons; instead of asking what psychic factors motivated me, Hegel's theory asks for an explanation of my action in terms of the reasons I had for doing what I did. And on Hegel's theory, to say that I acted 'from duty' or 'for duty's sake' can mean only that the dutifulness of my action belongs to my intention, counts as a universal description under which I bring my action, and which explains my acting in the way I did.

The published text of the *Philosophy of Right* contains no positive account at all of what motives are; for such an account, we must refer to two Additions drawn from Hegel's lectures of 1822–3 (*PR* §§ 106A, 121A; cf. *VPR* 3: 330–1, 373–4). Both Additions emphasize that it is exclusively from the standpoint of morality that motives of an action are of interest. *PR* § 106A appears to identify the 'incitement' (*Triebfeder*) of an action with its intention (*Absicht*) or its 'principle' (*Grundsatz*). *PR* § 121A is more specific, describing the 'motive' (*Beweggrund*) of an action as 'the universal in the purpose and the particular of the intention'. The phrase 'universal in the purpose' is precisely Hegel's formula for the intention (*PR* § 119), so the import of *PR* § 121A seems to be that the motive of an action is a certain aspect or side of the intention, namely, its 'particular' side.

Relating this to *PR* § 121 itself, it seems evident that Hegel is identifying the 'motive' of an action with what he there calls the action's 'particular content' or 'moment of particularity', through which the action has 'subjective *value, interest* for me' (*PR* § 122). An action's 'motive', then, is just the agent's interest in it, the fact that success in the action will confirm or vindicate the agency of the individual who performs it. Hegel emphasizes that 'interest' in this sense is present even in the most unselfish actions, since it derives from my awareness of the confirmation of my agency in a successful action, whether the action itself is orientated to my own good or not (*EG* § 475). But 'interest' does in Hegel's view belong to the agent's well-being or happiness, along with the satisfaction of the agent's needs, inclinations, passions and so on (*PR* § 123).

Kant and Hegel agree that every action has an end, and that an action performed on account of the appeal of this end to the agent is an act done from inclination and not purely from duty alone. But the appeal of an action's end to the agent is surely one of the features which make the action desirable to the agent. Consequently, it must belong to the intention of the action. That is why Hegel thinks that the setting and pursuing of an end necessarily involves the agent's particularity, interest or self-satisfaction, the element of empirical desire which the Kantian thinks must be excluded from the will if it is to be a good will. The Kantian good will is therefore necessarily devoid of content because it cannot be directed to any determinate end without sacrificing its purity.

As before, Hegel's view is that reason can be practical only when it relinquishes its purity and expresses itself through empirical desires; universal ends get carried out only through the particular interests agents take in carrying them out. 'The abstract universal end, insofar as it is done, since it steps into actuality, becomes a determinate end. My interest is in my doing in different ways. . . . That my well-being is my intention constitutes the scope of particularity. . . . This right lies immediately in particularity and is not for itself to be regarded as something bad' (*VPR*19

96–8). As if to drive the point home against Kant, Hegel identifies the 'motive' of an action with precisely that 'particular' side of it which is necessary for setting and pursuing an end, and which in Kant's view is to be contrasted with the 'universal', with the pure thought of duty or respect for the moral law.

§ 6 HEGEL ON THE GOOD WILL

Hegel characterizes the morally good will as one which 'in its insight and intention is in accordance with the good' (*PR* § 131). My 'insight' accords with the good if (1) I act so as to further what I believe to be good, and (2) my beliefs about the good and the relation of my action to the good, are objectively correct ones. My 'intention' accords with the good if (3) the goodness of what I do belongs to my intention. On Hegel's theory of intention, the last condition is satisfied whenever I am aware of the objective goodness of my action, and this objective goodness is one of the features of the action which make it desirable for me or give me an (internal) reason to do it.

From the moral standpoint, Hegel says, an action which accords with the good can be represented abstractly as a 'duty'; for this reason, Hegel agrees with Kant that a good will must do its duty for duty's sake (*PR* § 133).[15] But Hegel does not say, and does not believe, that a good will must do its duty *only* for duty's sake. He regards as pernicious the attitude of the moralist who criticizes the substantively good acts of great men on the ground that in those acts the agents intended and achieved happiness, fame, honour or self-satisfaction for themselves. It is in this context that Hegel quotes the proverb 'No man is a hero to his valet' – adding: 'not because the man is not a hero, but because the valet is only a valet' (*PhG*, para. 665; cf. *PR* § 124R, *VG* 104/87–8).

Kant famously denies a good will to the shopkeeper who serves customers honestly because he finds that honesty is good business, just as he denies such a will to people who do good to others because they have an immediate inclination to make others happy and derive satisfaction from it; the actions of such people, Kant insists, have no moral worth (*G* 397–8/13–14). But Kant does not mean that merely having self-interest as an incentive is sufficient to disqualify a person from having a good will and performing acts with moral worth. Instead, he requires for the moral worth of one's action only that one should in the particular case *act from* duty rather than from these other motives, and for a good will only that the agent should so abstract from these other motives as to make the motive of duty *predominant* over them in the performance of this action.[16]

For Hegel, by contrast, it is sufficient for the shopkeeper to have a

good will that he behaves honestly and that his 'intention accord with the good'. For the latter, it is required only that the dutifulness of honest conduct should be one feature (among others) which attracts the agent to the action, and that dutifulness should appeal to the agent for its own sake – it should be 'the final ground' of the action (*VPR* 4: 354). Thus Hegel would deny a good will to the shopkeeper who finds nothing attractive at all about the moral goodness or dutifulness of this policy; and a shopkeeper who cannot be relied upon to conduct business honestly is a bad man no matter what his motives or intentions may be, simply because he is deficient in the fundamental *ethical* virtue of 'uprightness' (*Rechtschaffenheit*) (*PR* § 150). But further, to act for duty's sake is to have a 'moral disposition (*Gesinnung*)' (*VPR*17 83, 246; cf. *PR* § 137); it is to perform the action 'because it is good (*weil sie das Gute ist*) [or] because it is right' (*VPR* 4: 354). By such statements I think Hegel means that if I am to have a good will, the goodness or dutifulness of my action must not only attract me but must attract me enough in this case to be a sufficient (internal) reason for the action. I must care enough about duty at the time I act that the dutifulness of the action by itself is sufficient to account for my performance of the action.

Comparing Hegel's theory of the good will with Kant's, we see that Hegel's theory makes the good will and morally worthy actions essentially harder to acquire in one way, but essentially easier in another. Hegel requires that our 'insight accord with the good', that is that we act from objectively correct moral beliefs (*PR* § 140R), while Kant requires only that we sincerely follow our conscience (*TL* 401/61). But to have a good will it is not necessary in Hegel's view that the moral goodness or dutifulness of one's act should predominate over other motives, nor is it necessary to the moral worth of an action that it should be done solely or mainly from duty. The goodness or dutifulness of what I do must, of course, attract me enough to account for my performance of the act. But where it does so, the presence of other, attractive features of the act, and the relative strength for me of these non-moral incentives in comparison to the moral ones, in no way detract from the moral worth of my act and the goodness of my will.

Kant identifies the goodness of my will with the striving for complete 'purity' of will. For Kant, my will is 'pure' only where 'no incentives of inclinations are the determining grounds influencing an action done as a duty' (*KpV* 160/165). The pure will is not necessarily one which lacks non-moral *incentives* to the dutiful action, but it is one which succeeds in abstracting itself from these incentives as far as the motivation of the act is concerned. The pure will, moreover, is one in which the moral motive is not only strong enough to account for the agent's performance of the act in those particular circumstances, but also strong enough for the agent still to perform the dutiful action even if every conceivable

non-moral incentive stood opposed to doing it. Thus Kant invites us to imagine an honest man asked to give false testimony against an innocent and powerless person. First he is offered bribes and inducements to join in the unjust calumny. When he declines them, he is threatened with the loss of the affection of his friends and family, with the deprivation of his every happiness, even with the loss of his freedom and his life itself, if he refuses. True purity of will is to be found only in those who do their duty in such a way that they would still do it even in such an extreme situation (*KpV* 155–6/159–60). For Kant, we can have a good will without *having* a pure will in this sense; but to have a good will we must *strive* to the best of our ability after such purity of will in every act where duty is at stake.

Hegel demands no such acts of abstraction, no such fanatical purity, not even the striving after it. For him, it is enough for a good will that I do my duty and that my disposition to do it in this case is strong enough to account for my dutiful action under the present circumstances. Beyond this, it makes no difference whether I would still do the action even if sorely tempted not to do it; and it is an unanswerable question, or at any rate a morally irrelevant one, whether it is duty or non-moral motives which are said to bring about the act in me.

For Kant whether or not one acts from duty is morally crucial because the autonomy or heteronomy of one's actions depends on how they are psychologically *caused*. Kant's strenuous denial that our free acts cannot be the result of natural causality should not blind us to the fact that his theory of action is essentially a causal deteminist one, in which every act is seen as arising from a motive either of reason or of inclination, which brings about the act according to a causal law selected by the power of choice (*R* 35/30). Autonomy is, in Kant's words, 'the causality of reason' (*KpV* 80/83). This is why Kant thinks we must distinguish having something as my end and being motivated by having it as my end. Every action has an end, but only actions motivated by a material principle are motivated by the agent's attachment to the end; and it is also possible for my pursuit of an end to be motivated by the legislative form of my maxim. This difference in motivation is a difference in the way the actions are caused. Only acts done from duty have their cause wholly in our pure reason, and only they are truly autonomous; acts done from other motives exhibit the susceptibility of our power of choice to alien influences, and so they are heteronomous. The moral worth of an act for Kant depends accordingly upon the causal strength of the motive of duty in the act's production, as compared with other motives the agent has, just as the goodness of a will depends on the agent's disposition to acts whose sole or dominant cause is the motive of duty (*R* 28–30/23–6). And Kant holds that we cannot judge the moral worth of our actions because he thinks that the causal mechanisms which produce them belong to the

intelligible world, and are therefore unknowable by us. Thus Kant denies that experience enables us to cite even a single sure example of the disposition to act from duty, on the grounds that we can never be absolutely certain that some 'secret impulse of self-love, pretending to be the idea [of duty], was not the genuine determining cause of the will' (*G* 407/23).

From one point of view, Hegel's rejection of Kant's theory of moral worth can be understood as a rejection of the psychological determinism on which Kant's theory is based. For Hegel, the will has from nature a set of drives or original inclinations (*PR* § 11), but in relation to them it is also a 'pure indeterminancy' which derives its contents not from nature but from an act of self-determination (*PR* §§ 5–7). On account of the moment of pure indeterminacy in the will, Hegel says that 'I can abstract from every determination', I am 'unrestricted possibility' (*PR* § 5R), 'I can do anything, omit anything' (*VPR* 3: 111, *VPR* 4: 112). What Hegel means by this, I think, is that whatever limitations there may be on our possibilities to act, they do not include the *contents* or *determinations* of our wills, that is our drives or desires. Our desires may determine what we *in fact* do, but not by limiting in any way what we *can* do. Over against any or all of them, we remain wholly free to act contrary to their dictates. And since causes necessitate their effects, Hegel denies that the will stands in any causal relation to its motives or to the other circumstances which determine it (*NP* 222; cf. *EL* § 195, A).

The idea that the will is free in relation to its desires and so is not causally determined by them makes Hegel look very much like an incompatibilist-indeterminist on the issue of free will. Yet it is sometimes held that Hegel is a compatibilist or soft determinist.[17] This view is sometimes based on a misreading of passages in which Hegel asserts that necessity is identical with freedom (*WL* 6: 239–40/570–1; *EL* §§ 157–9). This *is* a misreading, because in such passages the concept of 'necessity' is not a concept of causal necessitation but rather one of organic interconnectedness or teleological inevitability (cf. *PR* §§ 267A. 269A, 270A). But there is nevertheless truth in the compatibilist interpretation of Hegel, in another way. Precisely *because* Hegel rejects psychological determinism, his theory of human agency is conceived entirely in non-causal terms, and consequently his theory of moral responsibility would be entirely compatible with any form of physical determinism which allowed that, in some appropriate sense of 'can', we always can act against our drives, desires, motives and so forth. Also strikingly compatibilist in character is Hegel's theory of moral responsibility. Although Hegel believes that I can do otherwise than I do, this belief plays no role in his theory of responsibility. For Hegel, I am responsible for doing a certain deed under a certain description if I in fact did the deed, knew I was doing it under that description, and intended to do it under that description. In principle

these conditions could all be satisfied even if there were no possibility that I could have done otherwise.

This means that Hegel's rejection of Kant's psychological determinism is not his basic reason for rejecting Kant's theory of moral worth. Given Hegel's theory of the good will, even if our actions are involved in a physical or psychological determinism, their causes are irrelevant to their moral worth, since that rests entirely on the nature of the act, the agent's knowledge and the agent's intention, that is the features of the act which the agent regards as making it desirable enough to do. The crucial point is not that Hegel rejects the psychological determinism presupposed by Kant's theory, but that he regards the causal antecedents of acts as irrelevant to their moral worth and to the goodness or badness of the will which performs them.

§ 7 THE GOOD INTENTION

When Kant's shopkeeper deals honestly with his inexperienced customer, he is aware of at least two features of this action which recommend it to him: (a) by helping to protect his reputation for honesty, honest dealing will be profitable in the long run; and besides that, (b) honest dealing accords with the good: it is his duty. Let us suppose that he is both morally disposed enough and concerned enough for his reputation that under the circumstances either of these incentives would be reason enough for him to deal honestly. Aware of and attracted by both these features of honest dealing, the shopkeeper in fact chooses to deal honestly with the customer, though as a free agent he could have acted against all these reasons and cheated the customer. That, as Hegel sees it, is an exhaustive report of the morally relevant facts of the case. And they are sufficient for the shopkeeper to have a good will and his act to have moral worth.

If Kant now asks which of the two motives caused the shopkeeper to act according to duty, or wonders in what proportion each contributed to it, or which motive was the stronger in producing it, or if he conjectures what the shopkeeper would do if threatened with torture and death unless he cheats the customer, then Hegel's response is simply to reject all these questions as having no answers, or at least no morally relevant answers. Kant himself agrees that the answers to all such questions are unknowable, since the causality which produces our actions belongs wholly to the intelligible world.[18] Hegel merely draws the quite sensible conclusion that if such matters are necessarily nothing to us, they cannot possibly concern us as moral agents and we have no business building our concept of moral worth upon them. Consequently, the moralist's anguish about whether he has 'done the right deed for the wrong reason', together

with the whole grand Kantian struggle of duty with inclination in the shopkeeper's soul, carried on somewhere in the intelligible world with God as the sole witness to the combat – this entire drama is a fiction, a fantasy, simply a product of the moralist's unhealthy imagination.

For Hegel, what is unhealthy about the Kantian moralist's fantasy is that it 'presupposes a gap (*Bruch*) between what is objective in the action and what is inner, subjective in its motives' (*PR* § 121A). By contrast, Hegel recommends the 'higher *moral* standpoint which finds satisfaction in the action itself' and eschews the imaginary satisfaction to be derived from blaming one's failures on the niggardly provision of a stepmotherly nature. Actions, of course, are not mere events; they must be understood in the light of their subjective intention. Yet Hegel denies that the subjective intention is anything apart from the series of actions in which it is displayed; 'What a man does is to be considered not in its immediacy but only as mediated through his inwardness and as a manifestation of his inwardness. Only here we must not overlook the fact that the essence and the inwardness confirm themselves as such only by stepping forward as appearance' (*EL* § 112A).

'What the subject is', Hegel insists, 'is the series of his actions. If these are a series of worthless productions, then the subjectivity of his willing is just as worthless. But if the series of his deeds are of a substantial nature, then so it is also with the inner will of the individual' (*PR* § 124; cf. *EL* § 140A). Or as he puts it in the *Phenomenology*: 'The truth of the intention is only the deed itself' (*PhG*, para. 159). There is no room in Hegelian morality for a good will which strives after the good but unhappily never shows itself in substantially good accomplishments, just as for Aristotle there is no genuine virtue or excellence which does not show itself in successful action.[19]

Hegel's fundamental concern in rejecting the Kantian conception of the good will is to prevent our conceiving of the good will as an essentially alienated form of human existence, cut off both from its own sensuous nature and from the real world in which it acts. Just as the Kantian picture of a struggle of motives in the intelligible world alienates our practical reason from our self-satisfaction, so in Hegel's view the Kantian idea that the moral worth of willing and acting does not depend on their results alienates moral agents from their existence in the real world and from their concerns with it. This idea makes us regard the essence of our moral action itself as occurring in an alien world, a beyond, so that our noblest actions and accomplishments in the real world are made to seem to us at best as by-products of moral willing, whose worldly splendour may always be nothing more than dazzling costume which cloaks a bad will.

To Hegel, it is only too obvious how the Kantian picture appeals to the envy of those who never accomplish anything, and who are looking

both for a way of denying admiration to good wills and good actions in others, and for some saving interpretation to place on their own worthless deeds and failed projects. If such people have the good fortune to find in themselves no passion or interest in life more powerful than the pale thought of moral duty, then they may always console themselves with the thought that despite their outward failure, they may nevertheless possess inwardly a good will which, though wholly invisible to human eyes, shines in the intelligible world like a jewel, having its full value in itself.

§ 8 MORAL FREEDOM AND SELF-ALIENATION

Of course Hegel does not deny that people can conceal their intentions, and that good intentions can sometimes accidentally fail to achieve good results (*VG* 66/57). He proposes to judge an agent's intention not by the fruits of an isolated action but by the worth of the whole series of actions in which this intention is displayed. Even so, it is a hard saying that I am nothing but the series of my actions. For this amounts to a direct rejection of the powerful moral impulse to believe that in regard to moral goodness of will there can be no such thing as good or bad luck, that each person's moral worth depends entirely on that person, that the goodness of my will is wholly and solely up to me.

This moral conviction that the worth of a person must be beyond luck is, to begin with, Kant's deepest reason for wanting to measure the will by its purity, by whether we would do our duty even in the most extreme circumstances. For it is only good luck, after all, that ever makes our duty easier to do than this. 'How many people who have lived long and guiltless lives', Kant asks, 'may not be merely *lucky* in having escaped many temptations?' (*TL* 393/52) It is responsible too for Kant's insistence that a goodness of will does not require complete purity of will, but only the utmost striving after purity. For even here, it is only striving and not success which lies wholly within our power. The same conviction is also Kant's deepest reason for holding that as free moral agents we must have an existence beyond nature, outside space and even outside time; for only in the noumenal realm are we safe from all good or ill chances.

Finally, this moral conviction is also Kant's deepest reason for insisting that there is no moral worth to actions motivated by beautiful inclinations such as love and sympathy. Against such inclinations, Kant's usual argument is that they are unreliable, and produce good actions only by chance: conformity to law achieved through fine inclinations is only 'contingent and spurious, because, though the non-moral motive may now and then produce lawful actions, more often it brings forth unlawful ones' (*G* 390/6). But this argument is powerless against the inclinations of a person

with Hegelian ethical virtue or Schillerian 'grace', since to have grace is to have inclinations which are exquisitely sensitive to the demands of reason, so that they do reliably produce dutiful actions. Perhaps Kant thought such a state of one's inclinations impossible of attainment for flawed human nature; but that would be no argument against grace as an ideal to be sought after. Surely Kant is the very last moral philosopher one would expect to find complaining of a moral ideal that it asks too much of frail human nature.

Kant's real reason for denying moral worth to acts motivated by inclination is seldom made explicit, but it shows itself fairly plainly in passages such as the following:

> If nature has put little sympathy in some man's heart, and if (though otherwise an honest man) he is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because he overlooks his own sufferings through special gifts of patience and strength to endure them and presupposes or even demands the same in others; if nature has not made such a man into a philanthropist (though truly he would not be her worst product), would he not nevertheless find in himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than he could have got by having a good-natured temperament? Of course. For it is just here that the worth of character is brought to bear, which is morally and incomparably the highest of all: he is beneficent not from inclination but from duty.
>
> (*G* 398–9/14–15)

Here Kant contrasts qualities of temperament, such as sympathy and philanthropy, or patience and strength, with worth of character, or moral worth, which is shown only when we act from duty. And it is clear that qualities of temperament lack the highest kind of worth because they are given us by *nature*, whereas worth of character is something *we give ourselves* by using a source within us – by actualizing our transcendental freedom, exercising our capacity to act independently of all inclinations, by acting from duty. Though Kant realizes that we may have some effect on our own temperament by developing the seeds of the fine and amiable qualities nature has planted in us, he avoids Aristotle's mistake by resisting the temptation to infer from this that our temperament is something which is up to us in the same sense that our free actions are.[20] For both the starting place and the ease of cultivating a fine temperament are different for different people, and not up to us. Ethical virtue or grace, therefore, cannot be the highest measure of the worth of a person, because it lies outside what is strictly up to the person; it is always to some extent a matter of luck. But moral worth, which is the incomparably highest measure of personal worth, must be wholly up to the person, and

not in the smallest degree a gift of nature, a product of education or a result of good luck.

Thus when Kant asserts that love and sympathy produce good actions only 'contingently' or 'accidentally', perhaps he should be understood to mean not merely that such inclinations are unreliable in producing good actions, but also that even when inclinations produce good actions in me reliably, my performance of good actions from such inclinations is always merely a piece of good luck, and thus does me no moral credit. Since my inclinations are not wholly up to me, they are not *me* at all but only part of my fortunate or unfortunate lot. Unlike my noumenally free choices, my inclinations and qualities of temperament are related to the real me only accidentally or contingently, and that is the deeper sense in which they produce good actions only 'contingently and spuriously'.

Kant's conception of the good will and moral worth is simply the most courageous, candid admission in the history of philosophy of what we are committed to if we hold consistently to the moral conviction that the real worth of people and their actions cannot depend on nature or luck, but must lie entirely in what is up to the agent. Kant realized like no one before or since that this conviction is deeply woven into our conception of morality, and it is a powerful source of morality's hold on us. Anyone who, like Hegel, seems prepared clear-sightedly and deliberately to abandon it is bound to seem to us like someone who is ready to repudiate morality altogether.

But the problem is that this conviction, however strongly we may be tempted to it, flies in the face of the facts.[21] In the light of Kant's theory, what Hegel made bold to stress is that the conviction can be saved only by paying the unacceptable price of self-alienation. To save it Kant must suppose that our moral selves are different from the empirical selves whose actions we will and know and care about. To preserve our true (that is moral) selves safe from nature and fortune, Kant must exile from this self all our natural feelings and desires, and banish even the love, courage, moderation in passions, and the other qualities which the entire pre-Kantian ethical tradition counted as paradigmatic of our highest virtues. He can retain for the moral self only a single abstract and misanthropic feeling: respect for the law, and only a single cold and (by Kant's own admission) utterly unnatural motive: the motive of duty.

What bothers Hegel about the use which envious failures make of Kantian ethics is not the fact that Kant's theory admits of hypocritical and self-serving misinterpretations – even the truest theories admit of that, as some notorious misreadings of Hegel's own moral and political views amply illustrate. The point is that this particular misuse of Kantian morality exhibits in all its neurotic ugliness the perverse flight from reality, both natural and social, both within ourselves and beyond ourselves, which belongs to the Kantian conception of moral worth even in its

most authentic manifestations. Kantian morality tries to find a freedom independent of what is other than freedom, independent of nature and fortune; but it does so by fleeing from what is not freedom seeking a refuge beyond this other. For Hegel, by contrast, 'the freedom of spirit is an independence of the other won not outside the other but in the other; it comes to actuality not through a flight before the other but rather by overcoming it' (*EG* § 382A). Freedom or autonomy for Hegel is therefore *Beisichselbstsein in einem Andern*, 'being with oneself in an other'. To become free is to turn what is the other of freedom, whether inside or outside ourselves, and whether it be nature, or society, or luck, into a positive manifestation of freedom. The higher moral standpoint thus finds satisfaction not in the goodness of one's will but in its substantial achievements, and it seeks not to abstract itself from its natural desires but rather to find in these desires themselves the natural vehicles of free rationality.

§ 9 CONCLUSION

The puzzle is: why did Hegel choose to articulate this criticism of the Kantian conception of the good will and moral worth in the form of the emptiness charge, apparently as a criticism of one particular formulation of the Kantian moral principle? The solution is to be found in *Faith and Knowledge*, where, from the standpoint of the theory of moral action which he was not to make explicit for some years, Hegel tries to imagine what it would be like to act solely from duty. Given Hegel's theory, this could only be to perform some action while bringing it under no other universal or intentional description than that it is my duty to do it. But I could do this only if I omitted to think of the act as having any determinate end, since the end of any act is that for whose sake it is done, and surely belongs to its intention if anything does. Yet any act throught of in terms of its end would be an act whose intention includes an element of subjective satisfaction, which would render my will impure by Kantian standards. Thus to have a pure will is to act in a way that is so alienated from every concrete consideration that it must be quite indeterminate what I do. On the other hand, to act from determinate duties is necessarily to conceive of my actions in the light of their determinate ends. And that will involve acting from interests and concrete commitments, to individuals, to institutions, to projects, causes, movements, commitments which display that harmony or identity of reason and inclination, universality and particularity, to which Hegel gave the name 'ethics' (*Sittlichkeit*).

No doubt Hegel did think, as many others have since thought, that Kant's universal law formula is empty in the sense that it is incapable of

generating any particular duties or excluding any course of action as contrary to duty. But the chief significance of this thought for Hegel was that it provided confirmation of the idea that a morality of pure duty is incompatible with the use of any criterion of duty stronger than non-contradiction. Not only is Kant committed to this absurd result – so Hegel thought – but he even exhibits this commitment himself, by formulating a moral principle whose only criterion of moral conduct is non-contradiction. I have not tried to decide whether Hegel was right in thinking that Kant's universal law formula is empty in this way. But I have tried to show that the main motivations behind Hegel's emptiness charge are independent of this question. The emptiness charge would still raise important problems for Kantian morality even if Hegel and others have all been entirely wrong in thinking that there are insuperable problems in applying Kant's universal law formula.[22]

Notes

1 All translations from the writings of Kant and Hegel are my own. Standard English translations, where available, will be cited along with the original, with English pagination following German pagination separated by a slash (/).

Writings of Kant

GS *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*. Berlin: Ausgabe der koeniglich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910–. Cited by volume and page number.

G *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, *GS* 4.
Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, translated by Lewis White Beck. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959. Cited by page number.

KpV *Kritik der praktische Vernunft*, *GS* 5.
Critique of Practical Reason, translated by Lewis White Beck. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956. Cited by page number.

R *Religion innerhalb der Genzen der blossen Vernunft*, *GS* 6.
Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper & Row, 1960. Cited by page number.

TL *Metaphysik der Sitten: Tugendlehre*, *GS* 6.
The Doctrine of Virtue, translated by Mary J. Gregor. New York: Harper & Row, 1964. Cited by page number.

TP *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis*, *GS* 8.
'On the Proverb: That May be True in Theory, but is of No Practical Use', in Ted Humphrey (tr.): Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History and Morals*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983.

Writings of Hegel

Werke *Hegel: Werke: Theorie Werkausgabe*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970. Cited by volume.

D *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie* (1801), *Werke* 2.
The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy, translated by H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf. Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.

EL *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* I (1817, rev. 1827, 1830), *Werke* 8.
Hegel's Logic, translated by William Wallace. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. Cited by paragraph (§) number. Additions are indicated by an 'A'.

EG *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* III (1817, rev. 1827, 1830), *Werke* 10.
Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, translated by William Wallace and A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. Cited by paragraph (§) number. Additions are indicated by an 'A'.

EH *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1817 Heidelberg version). *Hegels Sämtliche Werke*, 4. Auflage der Jubiläumsausgabe, edited by Hermann Glockner. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1968. Volume 6. Cited by paragraph number.

GW *Glauben und Wissen* (1802), *Werke* 2.
Faith and Knowledge, translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris, Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.

JR *Jenaer Realphilosophie* (1805–6), edited by J. Hoffmeister. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969.
Hegel and the Human Spirit, translated by Leo Rauch. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983. Cited by page number.

NP *Nürnberger Propädeutik* (1808–11), *Werke* 4.

NR *Über die wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts* (1802), *Werke* 2.
Natural Law, translated by T. M. Knox. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975. Cited by page number.

PhG *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), *Werke* 3.
Phenomenology of Spirit, translated by A. V. Miller Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. Cited by paragraph (para.) number.

PR *Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), *Werke* 7. Notes in Hegel's hand are indicated by 'z' followed by the number of the appropriate paragraph.
Hegel's Philosophy of Right, translated by T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1967). Cited by paragraph (§) number. Remarks are indicated by an 'R', Additions by an 'A'. Preface cited by page number.

TJ *Theologische Jugendschriften* (1793–1800), *Werke* I.

ETW *Early Theological Writings*, translated by T. M. Knox. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971. Cited by page number.

VG *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1955).
Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, translated by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975). Cited by page number.

VGP *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* Bd. 1–3, *Werke* 18–20.
Lectures on the History of Philosophy, translated by Elizabeth Haldane. New York: Humanities Press, 1968. Cited by volume and page.

VPR *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie*, edited by K.-H. Ilting. Stuttgart:

Frommann Verlag, 1974. Including notes and transcriptions from Hegel's lectures of 1818–19 (transcription by C. G. Homeyer), 1821–2, 1822–3 (transcription by H. G. Hotho), 1824–5 (transcription by K. G. von Griesheim), 1831 (transcription by D. F. Strauss). Cited by volume and page number.

*VPR*17 *Die Philosophie des Rechts: Die Mitschriften Wannemann (Heidelberg 1817–1818) und Homeyer (Berlin 1818/19)*, edited by von K.-H. Ilting. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1983. Cited by page number.

*VPR*19 *Philosophie des Rechts: Die Vorlesung von 1819/1820*, anonymous transcription(s), edited by Dieter Henrich. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983. Cited by page number.

WL *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812, 1816), *Werke* 5–6. Cited by *Werke* volume and page number.
Hegel's Science of Logic, translated by A. V. Miller. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969. Cited by page number.

In writings cited by paragraph (§), a comma used before 'R' or 'A' means 'and'. Thus: 'PR § 33,A' means: 'PR § 33 and the addition to § 33'; 'PR § 270,R,A' means: 'PR § 270 and the remark to § 270 and the addition to § 270'.

2 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, edited by George Sher (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishers, 1979), p. 4.

3 See: Marcus Singer, *Generalization in Ethics* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), pp. 292–5; Dieter Henrich, 'Das Problem der Grundlegung der Ethik bei Kant und im spekulativen Idealismus', in P. Engelhardt (ed.), *Sein und Ethos* (Mainz: 1963); Andreas Wildt, *Autonomie und Anerkennung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1982), 84–96, Christine Korsgaard, 'Kant's Formula of Universal Law', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, forthcoming. The most formidable recent interpretation of the universal law formula, defending it against criticisms like Mill's, is Onora Nell (O'Neill), *Acting on Principle: An Essay on Kantian Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), especially ch. 5. The exception to the rule, someone who argues that Hegel's emptiness charge against Kantian ethics can be sustained on the usual interpretation, is Michael Hardimon, 'Individual Morality and Rational Social Life: A Study of Hegel's Ethics' (University of Chicago Ph.D. Dissertation, 1985), ch. 1.

4 This connection between the emptiness charge and Hegel's critique of Kant's theory of moral motivation is made by Andreas Wildt, *Autonomie und Anerkennung: Hegels Moralkritik im Lichte seiner Fichte-Rezeption* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1982), ch. 1, sec. 2.

5 See Barbara Herman, 'On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty', *The Philosophical Review* 90 (1981): 374–6. Cited below as 'Herman'.

6 See also Paul Dietrichson, 'What does Kant Mean by "Acting from Duty"?', in R. P. Wolff (ed.), *Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), and Allen Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 245–7.

7 Friedrich Schiller, 'On Grace and Dignity', *Schillers Werke* (Stuttgart: Cota'schen Verlag, 1898), Bd 11, pp. 238–96; cf. *Complete Works of Friedrich Schiller* (New York: P. F. Collier, 1902), vol. 8, pp. 175–229. Kant's brief reply to Schiller can be found at R 23–4n/18–19n.

8 In fact, in the essays of 1801–2, Hegel is orientated more to Fichte's moral philosophy than Kant's, and he seems to be thinking of the moral law here not in any of its Kantian formulations but instead in its formulation in Fichte's *Foundations of Ethical Theory* (1796). 'Always act according to your strongest

conviction concerning your duty; always act in accordance with your own conscience' (Fichte, *Werke* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1965), 4: 156). In this formulation, the Kantian idea of moral worth as acting from duty is treated as central to the moral law, as determining its whole content. It may be thought that Fichte's formula is essentially more open to the emptiness charge than Kant's universal law formula. But the fact is that in the *Foundations* Kant claims to derive the universal law formula entirely from the concept of a will which acts from duty, so that if Kant's derivation is sound, his principle ought not to contain anything not already implied in Fichte's.

9 See *Kant's Moral Religion*, pp. 40–52.

10 The claim that 'reason can of itself be practical' has more than one meaning. To begin with, it can either be a question about the reasons we can have for acting, or it can be a question about motivation. In the first sense, 'reason can of itself be practical' means that practical reasoning is not limited to finding means of satisfying antecedently given inclinations or desires, but our reason contains in itself grounds for choosing between different actions or principles which are not dependent on empirical desires. This is probably the most familiar sense, because it relates to the chief issue separating Kant from empiricist-instrumentalist theories of practical reason. In this sense, however, Hegel would not think of disputing the claim; he, every bit as much as Kant, believes that 'pure reason can of itself be practical', or, as Hegel likes to put it, the free will can be its own content, so that it is 'the free will which wills the free will' (*PR* § 27). In the sense that Hegel denies it, the claim that pure reason can of itself be practical is a claim about motivation: it is the claim that in moving us to act pure reason can (and should) assert itself in all its purity without the aid of any cooperating inclinations. Hegel denies this because he thinks that when we act from considerations of pure reason, we do so because pure reason expresses itself in and through empirical inclinations, which serve it as a necessary vehicle in relation to our sensuous nature. Kant, by contrast, denies that reason needs any such sensuous desires; for him, the only effect of pure reason on sensibility is the feeling of respect, whose only relation to our inclinations is to set limits to the extent to which we may permit ourselves to be moved by them (*KpV* 72–6/74–9).

11 As early as the *Natural Right* essay, Hegel insists that 'there can be no question of denying the [moral] standpoint, [but only of showing] that it is not the absolute standpoint' (*NR*, 458–9/74). Yet neither here nor in Hegel's other Jena writings and lectures is morality given any positive exposition. In the *Natural Right* essay, 'morality' is assigned to the 'unfree' class, the bourgeoisie (*NR* 506/114); the 'free class' (the military nobility) has an untintedly ethical outlook. The Jena lectures of 1805–6 still exclude morality from the outlook of the military nobility (*JR* 506/114), but it is specifically mentioned as part of the outlook of the civil servants, the 'public' or 'universal' estate, whose disposition is that of 'fulfilling one's duty' conceived as a 'free content' given to 'empty thought' (*JR* 259/169). A further recognition of the positive role of the moral outlook in the modern world is found in ch. 6 of the *Phenomenology*, which begins with Greek ethical life and ends with modern (Kantian) morality, thereby implying that the moral standpoint is a higher one than that of ancient ethical life. But the *Phenomenology*'s negative or 'sceptical' procedure left no place for developing a positive doctrine of morality.

12 As Karl-Heinz Ilting observes (*VPR*17 303–4, n. 125), Hegel's theory of moral responsibility seems to have trouble dealing with certain cases of negligence. If the hunter did not intend to kill the man he shot and if it does not

belong to the nature of his act of shooting into the darkness that he might hit a man, then it is unclear on Hegel's theory why he should be charged with any crime at all. The negligence in this case seems to derive from the fact that the hunter has an obligation to be certain that there is not a human being where he is shooting, and he has not met this obligation. Simply adding the obligation, however, would not explain how the hunter can be responsible for the man's death (as opposed to being responsible simply for not making certain) and how, if he is responsible for the man's death, this differs from being responsible for it in a case of deliberate murder. This defect in Hegel's theory, however, seems irrelevant to the issues which divide Hegel from Kant regarding the emptiness charge.

13 See Bernard Williams, 'Internal and External Reasons', *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 101–13.

14 Cf. Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 194.

15 This conception of duty for Hegel is appropriate only from the moral standpoint, where 'duty' is still something abstract and indeterminate. Later on, 'accord with the good' will get its more concrete specification in the form of accord with the 'substantial determinations' of ethical life – conformity to the demands of the laws and institutions of a rational society and conduct appropriate to the human 'relationships' (*Verhältnisse*) to which the agent stands to others in that society (*PR* § 148).

16 Herman, pp. 376–82.

17 See: Richard Schacht, 'Hegel on Freedom', in A. MacIntyre (ed.), *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 309; and G. H. R. Parkinson, 'Hegel's Concept of Freedom', in M. Inwood (ed.), *Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 156.

18 Kant is sometimes interpreted as holding (or being committed to hold) that only autonomous actions have intelligible causes, and that heteronomous actions are simply natural events subject to the causal determinism of nature. The consequence, of course, would be that we aren't responsible for heteronomous actions, since they are not free. That Kant is not committed to this position is argued in my paper 'Kant's Compatibilism', in A. Wood (ed.), *Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 78–9.

19 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), 1101b10–36 (pp. 28–9).

20 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 114b16–25 (pp. 69–70).

21 This point is made effectively by Thomas Nagel in 'Moral Luck', in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

22 In writing this paper, I have benefited from the comments of many individuals, including those who particpated in discussions of different versions of it at Reed College, the University of California at San Diego, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Rochester, SUNY College at Geneseo, and Union College. For written comments on earlier versions of the paper I wish particularly to thank Terence Irwin, Robert Pippin and Andreas Wildt; and for their oral comments I am especially grateful to Henry Allison, Karl Ameriks, Anthony Appiah, Lewis Beck, Earl Conee, Alan Donagan, Paul Guyer, Jean Hampton, Charles Kahn, Christine Korsgaard, David Lyons, Ralf Meerbote, George Myro, Dennis O'Brien, William Peck, Sydney Shoemaker, Peter Steinberger, Nicholas Sturgeon and Neil Thomason.

The *Phenomenology*: beyond morality

Judith N. Shklar

From his earliest to his last years Hegel looked upon Kant's moral philosophy as 'the autocracy of the subjective'.[1] Both terms of this indictment are important. The Kantian moral law is seen as both too repressive and too private. Its rigour sets it apart from all the less rational forms of moral individualism. These might be self-centred and self-deluding, but not oppressive. That is why they must be summoned to social order. The discussion of Kant, however, ends with a plea for tolerance. Nevertheless, though there is some unfairness and much severity in Hegel's criticisms of Kant, he never heaped upon him the contempt with which he treated the great man's various self-appointed disciples.[2] Deplorable as much of Kant's practical philosophy might be, it was clearly not a trivial episode in our moral history. On the contrary, it was the most important of the phenomena of the human spirit. It was also the spirit of the age.

THE VAGARIES OF DISSOCIATED REASON

In the *Phenomenology* Kant is mentioned by name only rarely, although there are many references to specific, and often familiar, passages from his work. In keeping with its entire design it presents a general state of mind, an outlook, rather than an account of a discrete system of thought. 'The moral point of view' is a 'Kantism', not directly Kant's ideas. It includes the psychological implications, the possible tendencies and the known effects, not only the original arguments. The boldness of Hegel's enterprise emerges from this approach. It allowed him to represent Kant as the final culmination of a moral attitude that had Socrates as its author. It also reveals that Hegel's real quarrel was with the entire tradition of morality that had turned away from ethics to an inner voice, that had

separated reason from and raised it above the passions and that, finally, renounced action in favour of the contemplative life. This tradition was far too well established to be simply rejected, but it might be modified. Hegel put his mind to that task, partly because he thought this morality to be asocial and partly because he saw it as a source of individual hypocrisy and needless misery.

With this in mind it is not surprising to find that Kantian moralism appears in two places in the *Phenomenology*, just before the drama of Athens' ethical spirit and right after the farce of the French Revolution. The reader is made to see it as a social débâcle.[3] Yet though Hegel was never effusive in those tributes to Kant that honesty seemed to wring from him, he never wavered in his recognition of the necessity of this morality. It was the only outlook conceivable in the age of the French Revolution, and more generally, its doctrines of autonomy and personal duty had to be realized fully if mankind was to rise to perfect self-knowledge.[4] Unless it is recognized that men as men are free and that they must be seen as such in their ability to choose or reject their duties, it would be impossible even to imagine a world in which mankind understood its own development and freely accepted the limits and necessities that were implicit, for each one, in it. One must be free first in order to know what freedom is and is not. The inadequacy of the moral point of view is in just this, that its view of freedom is erroneous, because like the crudest egotism, it has no sense of man as a social being. As such it severs the individual from the actual structure of his moral being.

The earliest and most common form of moral rationalism is hardly peculiar to Kant. It emerged as soon as the 'natural' ethical order dissolved and reason began to build its empire in 'a plurality of separate points', in each individual.[5] If Socrates presided over this dissolution of the old spontaneous, and therefore still unconscious, ethical order, it is in Roman Stoicism that we really see the outcome. The new morality is one that holds right and wrong to be self-evident truths. That was Cicero's message no less than that of all those modern philosophers who took their cue from healthy common sense.[6] Now Hegel had no objections at all to the sort of common sense that simply accepts the prevailing conventions without much ado. What he did find objectionable was that this common sense, a mere intuitive certainty, had been presented as the best master of philosophy. Since Cicero's day there were always pseudo-philosophers who confused common sense with reason. Such thinkers are ever ready to demonstrate to any sane person what is universally right and wrong on all occasions.[7] All mistook it for a self-legislating, rational faculty, capable by the use of simple logic of deriving specific rules from a set of universal laws that were simply obvious. Rules of conduct were thus only a matter of elementary arithmetic – and as Hegel was quick to

observe, just as tautological. Two plus two is four, and you ought to do what you ought to do. It is certain, edifying and convincing since both sides of the equation are identical. It is a pointless exercise that hides the actual sources of human laws. You ought to give a man his due, but due is only what you ought to give him. What that involves actually can only be determined by specific, recognized standards. Their rationality is social and not mathematically self-evident at all. Hegel saw, in short, what Bentham also had noticed in observing the Americans: all measures seemed self-evident to them because they were in agreement about them.[8] Hegel was making much the same point when he insisted that it is familiarity and common usage that engender our sense of moral self-evidence, not the operation of moral reason as a universal lawgiver.[9]

Reason that thinks of itself as laying down the law in this immediate and unconditional fashion cannot even achieve its own ends. It tends to create confusion. To illustrate this Hegel pointed to some of the most commonly accepted self-evident maxims. Kant, no less than Stoic natural law, had relied upon these, though not in the same way. The first adage to be dissected was: 'everyone ought to speak the truth'. That implies a condition, 'if he knows the truth'. That is unhappily something of which we may not be at all sure or even able to achieve. If our ability to speak the truth depends on circumstances beyond our control, then we can hardly call speaking the truth an unconditional duty. At best it amounts to saying that 'we ought to know'. That is irreducible, to be sure, but since we cannot know what it is that we ought to know until we already know it, that is a meaningless demand.[10]

Another celebrated command runs: 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. That is the rule reason imposes upon us in our relations to other people. Now love is not only a lively emotion; it is also notoriously blind. Clearly reason intends us to love intelligently, so that we will really benefit those whom we ought to love. Who, unhappily, really knows what is good for another person? Unintelligent love is only a cause of disaster. Foresight and much realism are needed here, and who possesses these powers? It is not something any individual person has at his command. 'Intelligent, veritable well-doing is . . . in its richest and most important form the intelligent, universal action of the state.' One individual, compared to the collective intelligence of a whole community, is 'trifling' and 'hardly worth talking about', when one comes to considering what is generally best for one's neighbour.[11] Few passages in the *Phenomenology* tell us more about Hegel's political philosophy. The state is the necessary surrogate for our feeble reason. Individual reason cannot predict, or remember, or survey enough to benefit its neighbour intelligently. It cannot legislate the duties of love. That is simply beyond its scope. We must rely on established social rules to guide us. If we attempt to set down general laws independently of these, we only come up with commands

that amount to no more than an endless series of 'ought to be'. It is never a solid, 'this is' the rule and must be so. That is what an ethical law is. Private reason is far too qualified by accident, by mere possibilities and sheer guesswork to have that quality of assurance. It cannot yield necessary rules that have specific applications. The best it can do is to set down formal rules that are self-evident only because they are general, without content and tautological. For practical life that will not do. At best reason might serve as a test for the logical consistency of rules that society has in its effective way, already created for us.[12]

This brings us to Kant at last, for had he not argued, in fact, that it was the highest task of practical reason, as of all philosophy, to be consistent?[13] Consistency, the sole aim of reason, preoccupied entirely with testing conventional rules, does not turn out to be very useful, at least not in Hegel's account. To begin with reason so applied is indifferent to the circumstances within which rules are applied. These, however, do matter a good deal to anyone who is faced with making a decision or defending his actions. But such considerations are beneath reason. It only asks whether the maxim upon which one acts is universally valid, and only tautologies seem able to pass that test. Everything depends on definitions. If there is property, then indeed it follows that X is entitled to his property. That is no great surprise, since property is merely that to which one is entitled, that being its definition. The real question is, however, not whether we owe X what we owe him, but whether there should be private property at all. If we argue that there should be no such institution, then X and everyone else is just as consistently not entitled to anything. Property, the absence of property no less than the community of property, are all self-consistent, though clearly not compatible with each other.[14] If one gets more specific there is less certainty. It is possible to argue, as Kant had, that all objects that can serve human ends ought to do so and that this gives the first possessor a *prima facie* claim.[15] One can assume just as easily, however, that the needs of *all* men, not the chance needs of him who happens to be in possession of a thing, are to be served and should determine proprietorship. If need justifies property then only a communistic system can distribute goods among its members in accordance with a single standard of neediness. That would be very likely to contradict the egalitarian principles inherent in such societies. For actual needs tend to vary from one person to another. Moreover, fairness would have to be given up altogether. Its criterion is always some sort of desert other than basic need. That does not mean that private property is the answer to this inconsistent system of distribution. Private property can also be shown to be inconsistent. If, as Kant had also claimed, a man's property is that which society has agreed to be his, to the exclusion of all other claimants then, it is not the proprietor who excludes them, but all the other members of

society who include him in a legal system which grants absolute rights to some things. That is not consistent with the idea of private property as an individual right claimed on the basis of universal reason. Rights, for which property is here only another name, are then social creations. If expressed in general rules they can be made generally applicable. That says nothing about their content or consequences. The test of rationality is, in short, no standard at all. It can justify everything that is put into the form of a general rule, since consistency is all that is required, but it can also be reduced to nonsense when placed next to competing but equally general rules.[16]

The chief point of these remarks is to show that reason applied to the rules that society creates for itself cannot prove that they are either necessary or unnecessary. The test of consistency is just a standard that does not apply. The effort to do so is merely a symptom of a disintegrated society. For an Antigone or any completely socialized citizen the very idea that laws should be tested or could be other than what they are would not arise at all.[17] That, however, is merely a damaging comparison between modern and ancient politics. To give his criticisms a more rigorous turn Hegel wanted to show that Kant's test of universal consistency was of no use in practice to ordinary men, even though it was meant to be available to even the meanest intelligence. That was so because men have only particular and specific obligations and these cannot be universalized into general, timeless and unconditional duties. To illustrate this Hegel chose to investigate an example Kant had originally used for his purposes: why should one repay deposits? To say that I ought to repay money deposited with me because otherwise the security of depositions in general would be destroyed did not seem to Hegel to make much sense. Like all tests which ask whether a rule or act is self-consistent, it fails to ask what purpose they serve. Why should there be deposits at all? I can simply say that I reject the idea of deposits. I can now redefine the debt and call it my property, rather than a deposit. If I do that I can quite consistently claim it as my very own and refuse to return it. If my reason is the final test of what is rightfully mine and thine I can always legislate in a manner most convenient to myself. An ethical citizen cannot do that because his social education, his sense of himself, prevents him from entering into such devious speculations. The imperative to be consistent may not encourage them, but it certainly renders them logically possible.[18]

However striking Hegel's comparison between the questioning and the ethical mentality may be, it is not a fair criticism of Kant. To be sure Kant held benevolence and, above all, truthfulness in high regard. He also offered far more plausible defences of these virtues than Hegel was ready to admit. The obligation to tell the truth merely means that one ought not to lie, that is *not* to say what one *knows* to be untrue. Ignorance is not lying, but since we are not totally ignorant we are often quite

capable of lying. That one ought to speak the truth does not therefore mean that one ought to know. It only means one ought not to lie when one does know what is true. To lie is not consistent with man's dignity as a rational and free being. Nor can lying be a universal law; one would still have to prove that, in truth, one is lying.[19] Benevolence is counselled as a matter of self-education, to overcome one's natural inclination to be indifferent or hostile to other people. It does not call for specific feelings of love, but for the cultivation of a disposition. That is a duty, and consistent if we are to strive for goodness. It has nothing to do with the mindless and maudlin sort of love that Hegel ridiculed and for which Kant had no use at all.[20]

Turning to Kant's theory of property one finds, first of all, a defence of the right of ownership in general, and then of private property. Like all claims, possession must be consistent with the universal law of external freedom, and it is justified only as the possibility of proprietorship. Consent is, indeed, needed to turn mere possession into a legal right, or property. Without that it is only a presumptive right. The point of the whole discussion is to give the right to possess objects a moral basis, which Hegel never examined and which contains those principles to which individual legal rules must conform. Consistency is not here a mere formula, but the obvious test for deciding whether a specific claim, in this case to things, conforms to the demands of a basic norm: that no one shall exercise any rights that are not compatible with the enjoyment of like rights by all others. As for the relatively minor issue of deposits, Kant certainly did think it irrational to pocket deposits. However, deposits were for him merely an example to illustrate the universal necessity of trust among men if there was to be any security of property at all. To destroy trust is to injure fatally the necessary condition for the safety of my property no less than anyone else's. The pursuit of a dishonesty, simply because one can get away with it, is thus self-defeating, because it threatens the fundamental understanding which renders not just deposits but any effective rights viable. Nor is the categorical imperative as a test ridiculous. If the maxims upon which one's acts are based cannot be made into universally acceptable rules, they are not rational. Stealing as a universal law makes not only theft impossible, since no one owns anything if everyone ought to steal, but it renders the thief's goods as insecure as those of his victims.[21] Such a rule is on its face ridiculous and to see this vindicates reason. Finally Hegel might have mentioned, as he in fact never did, the third formulation of the categorial imperative. The command never to treat men as mere means is *not* a mere formula or test and it *does* impose quite specific duties.

Hegel surely knew all this quite well. Why, then, did he present such a disjointed and arbitrary version of moral rationalism in general, and of Kant especially? Why did he treat Kant so derisively? It is not difficult

to see what he wanted to show: how easily dissociated reason can be misued to twist social norms hither and thither without being self-contradictory and how little it could tell us about our daily duties. This accomplished, even if in a rather irresponsible way, it was easy to see how far such ratiocination was from any truly ethical consciousness. It is the contrast that matters, and Hegel was determined to make it vivid. For the awareness of incompleteness aroused by contrast was, in Hegel's view, *the* central experience of the human mind in its continuous process of development. It engenders the tensions which force men to change and to expand their knowledge. Without the memory of Athens, Kant might not even have seemed so inadequate. This contrast between an ethical people and contemporary morality was not contrived. It was, in fact, also a deeply felt experience: Hegel's own, and that of his German contemporaries, most notably Schiller. The pervasive if not always precise unhappiness that Kant inspired in them led them directly to the only other educative experience that had a deep hold on their imagination: Hellenism. The analysis of morality and politics in terms of formal models seemed lifeless and remote. And nothing could be more different from it than the vision of a society in which people acted with and reached out to each other.[22] It is the contrast between looking at society and participating in it. This confrontation is itself an invitation to history, to leave a rationality that dissects actuality, in favour of one that remembers.

THE NEW ORDER OF HYPOCRISY

Kant leads to Athens because there is nowhere else to go. Eventually Athens will have to be left behind also, but first it must be spiritually regained, at least as a living memory. That meant a second, and far more extensive encounter with Kant's moral philosophy in the context of the radically disintegrated world of the French Revolution. 'The moral point of view' is what now, quite appropriately, prevails. The ensemble of attitudes that this phrase covers does not add up to anything as concrete as a human type. There is no Kantian man like the man of pleasure or the man of virtue whose portraits Hegel had drawn so skilfully. Now there is at best a bundle of arguments, not a recognizable figure. The hedonist or the man of virtue are wayward, but they are whole personalities. Hegel did not construct a Kantian man comparable to them. Kantian attitudes seemed to him to produce a fine crop of inhibited, self-righteous, unhappy hypocrites, but these new Tartuffes were not, and Hegel did not claim that they were, genuinely Kantian men. They were, on the contrary, the proof of the impossibility of such men. There is thus only a general 'moralistic' outlook. That term points to the very core of Hegel's objections to Kant as a moral philosopher. The divorce of moral

reason from all human inclinations, passions and physical notions renders moral activity unimaginable. The moral life of man has no psychological bearings at all. Since it cannot manifest itself in a fully human form, there can be no man who can be described as a Kantian moral man. Moral autonomy is isolated from man as a natural being and this bisection prohibits their being into a single frame. There are two halves which do not add up to a single whole.

The difficulties of Kantian morality begin with its exaggerated concern for human freedom. It is, in origin, an internalization of and a flight from the politics of the French Revolution. Like the latter it has individual freedom as its sole aim. Freedom and the awareness of moral freedom 'is its substance, its purpose and its sole and only content'.[23] Duty is self-generated and consists entirely of self-imposed rules freely accepted by the sovereign individual. He is a 'world within' himself.[24] This awareness is all that concerns him as a moral being. Nature plays no part in this moral order. Pleasure and passion have been banished, as have all other natural or instinctual motives for action. That is why the crisis of actualization has an even more devastating character in Kantian moralism than in the case of all the other brands of subjective morality. Moralism does not just fail the test of actualizing its principles: it cannot even try to meet it. Hegel had illuminated with cruel efficiency the occasions on which the men of pleasure, of the heart and of virtue disintegrate. The awful psychological tensions that their philosophical contradictions create at the moment of action simply shatter them. Kantian moralism never acts at all. Passivity, indeed paralysis, is built into this state of mind. For to act at all requires some expectation of happiness and the use of one's body and emotions. That suffices to render all action morally faulty, unfree and tainted by impure motives and the laws of physical causality. The man who says he acts as a Kantian moral man is a hypocrite. Kantian moralism is fit at most for judging, not acting. The insuperable cleavage between moral freedom and the laws of nature permit no other possibility.[25] For '[any] event occurring in time [as change] . . . [is] necessary under the laws of nature while at the same time its opposite is to be represented as possible through freedom under moral laws'.[26] Hegel virtually wrote his whole criticism of moralism around this sentence from Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

To demonstrate what he took to be the massive defects of Kantian moralism, Hegel not only disregarded the vital *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* entirely; he also shrewdly chose to consider *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Perhaps Hegel thought this relatively accessible work to have a greater impact upon the thinking public. He also may have judged it to express the Kantian outlook more perfectly, since unlike the *Foundations*, but like the *Second Critique* it emphasized the subjective necessity of faith in God. He was, after all, not offering

an analysis of Kant's philosophy, but a bird's-eye view of Kantian moralism as a quite general state of mind. In order to present this characteristic intellectual mood, surely common enough in his time, he chose to illuminate a few particularly pointed passages. Hegel was certainly not impartial in his selection, but there *is* much in that work to make morality seem a pursuit of internal self-perfection and a striving for a 'Beyond' that precludes achievement. When he charged that this was a morality that was merely 'an absolute task or problem' and 'an everlasting ought to be, which never *is*', Hegel was on fairly solid ground.[27] First of all, Kant thought that human evil was simply 'inextirpable by human powers'.[28] Yet morality postulates that it must be *possible* to overcome it, so that we remain obliged to keep trying. The best we can achieve is 'progress endlessly by continuing from bad to better'.[29] This moral growth is the gradual ascendancy won by moral maxims over sensuous nature. It is an effort to alter our motives. Reform cannot come from just improving our behaviour, but only through transforming our inner 'cast of mind'.[30] Our inner state is what matters since any act that rises from any motive other than the commands of the moral law is worthless. Anything else is a pursuit of self-love or of some desire for happiness, and this is the essence of evil. Unlike the Stoics Kant did not regard all our inclinations as inherently bad. Some are quite neutral. Morality does not demand their destruction, but only their consistent subordination to its laws.[31] The great and insuperable obstacle to this end is our desire for happiness. Yet we need not despair. If we were truly moral we would be worthy of happiness, and discover that nature and moral duty were at one – at some infinitely remote point.[32] That is, however, only an act of rational faith.

To Hegel all this meant simply that moral action had been ruled out. We are left with two choices: dutiful cultivation of our inner mind or activity tainted by natural inclination. The ultimate harmony of morality and happiness is merely a hope postulated, without a place in actual moral consciousnes. As we may not make our happiness part of our purposes we must do away with our sensibility and indeed with all that moves us to act. Though we are merely asked to subordinate our happiness to our duty, our nature, unless destroyed, must interfere with our moral will. This is in fact accepted when morality is taken to be an endless task. Actualization has been put off into an unreachable infinity.[33] This is a morality, then, that does not even aim at its own final success. For if we were actually to crush our sensibility morality would lose its sole purpose. There would be no more struggle.[34] Actualization cannot be considered seriously in view of 'the contradiction involved in an undertaking that at once ought to remain an undertaking and yet ought to be carried out'.[35] This disharmony reappears in the conflict between pure duty and our many actual duties. The latter are clearly contaminated by

actuality and by necessity. Their sacredness, if any, is in the unconditional aspect of pure duty that they may have. Duty in general, however, can only be a thought. Any specific duty exists in the realm of nature and thus detracts from the obligation to obey only *pure* duty.[36] In sum, 'there is no morally complete self-consciousness' and therefore 'there is no actual existence which is moral'.[37]

There was one element in Kant's moral theory that Hegel hated even more than its passivity: its vestigial Christianity and craving for a 'Beyond'. For Kant the one being for whom morality and pure duty are not a task but an accomplishment is not man, but a 'holy moral legislator'.[38] Although *Religion Within the Limits* opens with a ringing affirmation that man does not need 'another Being over him to apprehend his duty nor of an incentive other than the law itself for him to do his duty', the importance of just such a Being grows considerably in the course of the work.[39] For it emerges that though morality is neither derived from religious faith, nor obedience to the commands of God, it does 'ineluctably' lead us to religion. It 'extends itself to the idea of a powerful moral Lawgiver, outside of mankind, for whose will that is the final end (of creation) which at the same time can and ought to be man's final end'.[40] Moreover, morality cannot be achieved by individuals, but only by an entire community or mankind as a whole, living in a wholly uncoercive, loving 'ethical commonwealth' for which this Lawgiver alone legislates.[41] Since we know that we are obliged to work for this end, that is our duty, we would despair if we could not believe in a moral ruler of the world without whom we could not reach this end.[42] For if we strive to do our duty we may finally receive an incomprehensible grace which will erase the inevitable faults of even our best acts.[43] In short, the harmony between nature and morality, happiness and duty, subjective and universal reason is all guaranteed and depends on a 'Holy Legislator'. We *must* believe in this harmony.

Hegel was simply less pious than Kant, and these concessions to Christianity evidently repelled him. He could see nothing here but a 'vertiginous fraudulent process' which was an open invitation to hypocrisy.[44] The Holy Legislator was not consistent with moral autonomy in man. Either duty is self-legislation or it is obedience to another. It cannot be both. Kant of course denied that such obedience to another was involved, but Hegel was sure that to postulate any Holy Legislator had a sinister implication. It allows the dutiful to shift back and forth between self-legislation and the Lawgiver. Finally since men can only be good in a holy community, morality must await the Beyond. It is a mere 'unrealized thought element'.[45] 'Because the universal best ought to be carried out, nothing good is done', Hegel concluded bitterly.[46] Moralism, in short, does not permit moral action here and now. If it pretends to do so it degenerates into hypocrisy and 'its abhorrence of such dissemblance would be the

first expression of hypocrisy'.[47] After all, even honesty is not free from inclination, and is partially spoiled. Given Kant's well-known loathing for hypocrisy and pious self-deception it was a mean blow.[48] It was not, however, capable of striking Kant. After all every single one of Hegel's criticisms of Kantian morality rests on just those limitations upon the possible, in morals as in knowledge, that Kant had himself explicitly brought forward.[49] But Hegel was concerned less with Kant directly than with that deepest folly of a culture which sets so high a value on inner purity and self-perfection that it radically devalues social customs, politics and the necessities of actual life. That becomes quite clear as Hegel turns to the worst of all the consequences of Kantian philosophy: Fichte and his morality of conscience.[50]

This conscience deliberately turns its back on all Kant's wavering. It is 'simply spirit consciously assured or "certain" of itself, spirit which acts directly in the light of this assurance'.[51] No shifting back and forth between self-legislation and the Holy Legislator and no vain search for universality torment this consciousness. The voice of conscience is infallible. If one likes playing with words as much as Hegel did one cannot fail to notice that con-science is not just any sort of moral intuition, but that it means 'with knowledge' and, in German, certainty as well. In Fichte's version of the categorical imperative this aspect of conscience is certainly evident. There is no mention here of matching one's maxims against a standard of universality. 'Act always in accordance with your best conviction of your duty, or act according to your conscience'.[52] One would expect nothing less from the absolute ego in its moral phase. There is no occasion here for indecision or for dissimulation.[53] Nor is there any difficulty with happiness. Certainty is invariably accompanied by a happy feeling of inner harmony.[54] This is evidently subjectivity at its most extreme, but to Fichte it implied no indifference to others. The conscience does not only seek agreement, but feels a duty to convince other people of its own rightness. In cases of conflict between conscientious people each one has an obligation to work for harmony, if at all possible. One must persuade others. This must, of course, be a matter of reasonable discourse only, since one has a primary duty to respect the conscience of others.[55] Duty in practice consists entirely of knowing one's own mind and sharing one's convictions with others.[56]

Predictably Hegel detested conscience in this loquacious form. He was not inclined, however, to underestimate its importance or seriousness. Although in the *Phenomenology* he presented it in its most distorted and extreme manifestation, easily identifiable as a pastiche of Fichte's worst pages, he knew that its roots went deeper. For all its deformities this was still Socrates' 'daemon' and Luther's 'here I stand'. That in itself explains why conscience, even at its most subjective, deprived of a grounding in a Socratic Idea of the good, or in God, had a claim to one's

respect. Personal conscience is somehow 'holy' and gives the individual 'his infinite value'.[57] It is always 'a sacrilege' to violate this inner realm.[58] Finally conscience is an active force; it moves men to act. There is no perpetual crisis of actualization here. The self of conscience knows what must be done and does it, or at least says it. It is 'for the first time in moral experience, moral action as action'.[59] In its self-assurance it is troubled neither by the multiplicity of duties, nor by a vague moral law of pure duty. Its law is 'in the direct certainty of itself'.[60] Private individual conviction reigns supreme.[61] Conscience as a self-assured consciousness can dispense with all external guides as easily as it rejects all calculations. It need not refer to any law that stands apart from or opposed to the self and its conscientious activity. 'It is now the law which exists for the sake of the self and not the law for the sake of which the self exists.'[62] Each conscience translates itself into deeds and demands to be recognized by others.[63]

Hegel never forgot the cultural significance of conscience. This was Europe's dominant moral tradition. As such it was a force that contributed to creating a society that was always on the verge of dissolution. Indeed it prevented any movement towards the integration of the self and society into a genuinely free, ethical order. His objections to conscience, whether Socratic or Fichtean, were therefore quite different from those he had brought to bear against other kinds of moral subjectivity. The latter, when they collapsed so ineffectually, injured only the individual who had adopted one of them. He would despair, go mad or merely become ridiculous in his own eyes. Conscience is not that sort of danger to the individual. It is an ineluctable part of man. To be human means to have a conscience. Nevertheless, it is a menace to society. As long as conscience is in principle opposed to the ethical order it is only partially true. And it cannot possibly accept social limitations. Its very self-certainty renders that impossible. Certainty, as Hegel had noted on a variety of occasions, is no proof of truth at all.[64] Indeed it is often the greatest obstacle to reaching truth. In his attack on conscience Hegel therefore was intent upon showing how insubstantial the certainty of conscience was when in its self-assertiveness it revealed its hostility to accepted social norms. That conflict also had hidden dangers for the individual.

The social failures of conscience do not arise from the passivity and fear of partiality that afflict pure practical reason. Its convictions are boldy expressed and demand recognition from other men. However, how is one to know whether its claims are honest expressions of conviction or mere selfishness? The conformity of conduct to law and convention is no proof of conscientiousness. These are just external standards and not binding upon conscience in its self-sufficiency. The truth from within is the sole judge in all its own cases. Conflict and mutual suspicion are bound to arise, and conscience as the governing principle is quite incapable of

resolving them.[65] Even if it does resort to some universal rules of conduct to justify its judgments there is infinite room for arbitrariness. And conscience never hesitates to assert itself. It knows. What gives it that knowledge, however, is personal caprice, opinion, preference and interest.[66] When conscience acts it can and usually does 'attach its feeling of conscientiousness to any content'.[67] That means it can call anything it chooses good and right, which means, in practice, that it sanctifies the purest selfishness.

In the actual world a man may regard it as his duty to increase his property for the sake of his family. Other people may see only greed there. Another man may feel that he has a duty to preserve his life. Others may see only cowardice in that. Who is to judge? When each conscience is free to know, decide and state what its duties are there is no choice but to assent to any expressed declaration of duty.[68] One might, to be sure, suggest to conscience that it would be best to do what is generally known to be good for all, rather than to pursue a self-set path. That is, however, a solution that conscience will never accept. For the general good is not its own truth, but a standard set by law and social custom and right. The validity of these does not derive directly from the individual's own knowledge and convictions. They are externally imposed limitations which conscience in its freedom and self-sufficiency cannot endure.[69] That is also why conscience, though it wants to be accepted by others, will not make any compromises for the sake of harmony. That would be a concession to the general good, and it would also require conscience to engage in calculations about the consequences of deeds. Compromises express a concern with the results of what one does and predictions about its effects on other people. Such concessions to the world of probabilities and circumstances are wholly repulsive to conscience. It knows what to do, and the worth of that knowledge is just that it is its own. It cannot allow itself to be hampered with weighing duties and considering outcomes.[70] Each conscience is free to 'bind or to loose'.[71] In that way all are equal. Each one holds to the purity of his motives no matter what he does. Each one is, however, free to doubt the motives of all others. Everyone must analyse and estimate the 'real' motives of other men in terms of what they know, their own conscience. Knowing themselves so well they are likely to see nothing but low motives in others also.[72] The conscientious are suspicious, as well they might be.

The only way out of this impasse is mutual persuasion. Conscience regards this as its chief duty. After all self-declaration is how it manifests itself. An act is dutiful because the agent says that his conscience tells him so. Self-orientated as this language of conviction is it is not the language of nihilism and scorn uttered by *Rameau's Nephew*. The conscientious do not suffer from self-contempt. On the contrary they speak out to display their own perfection.[73] That is how conviction realizes

itself. In this it almost comes to resemble the language of an ethical community. Language is a bond that binds and serves to express shared attitudes which individuals absorb and express in their daily dealings with each other. The language of the conscientious also does that, but only within the limits of a mutual admiration society or possibly a religious community. There it is an instrument which is used to establish the worth of each speaker in the eyes of every other. However, the language of conscience quickly shows itself to be divisive. It is only 'a mediating element' between 'self-consciousness independent and recognized'.[74] It does not provide a measure or rule for speakers, only a way of expressing convictions, all of which, in all their mad diversity, must be recognized, given standing. That seemed to be all a Fichtean conscience demanded. 'Immediate knowledge on the part of the self which is certain of itself is law and duty . . . all that is required is that it should know this and *state* its conviction.'[75] These proclamations are expected to produce some sort of unity. Hegel might at this point have noted, as he had on other occasions, that language is a process that is more than a series of private utterances. It is an interaction in the course of which men impinge upon each other and each one moulds and is moulded by every other. Language is an internalization of an outer reality as much as it is the expressing of personal perceptions and understanding.[76] While this process occurs even in a community of 'beautiful souls', it is not for long. The essential egotism of these souls soon reveals itself and they degenerate into the vanity of irony and hypocrisy.[77] The specific character and content of the language of private conviction is such that it can never bind men together. The paradox of language is that though we share it, it is capable of reducing us to isolation. There are no principles or words of unity among self-admiring consciences, even if they all approve of each other and this way of talking. 'This general equality breaks up into the inequality of each individual existing for himself', because there is no way of overcoming the opposition of these individuals to other individuals or to society in general.[78] Each one demands that he be respected, but for what? Unless there is a common standard, even if it be only common humanity, to judge actions, there is no ground for respect. The sovereignty of personal conviction renders such a yardstick impossible. Its language is therefore just an act of self-assertion. Assurances of inner righteousness, without any references to actions, are not automatically convincing. Not deeds, only inner states are offered up to be recognized. Here duty *is* merely a matter of words. It is a situation that has only two possibilities, evil or hypocrisy. Evil is honest and declares, 'I do as I see fit.' Hypocrisy behaves the same way but proclaims loudly, 'I act out of deep, inner conviction.' Evil expects to be condemned. Hypocrisy and vanity insist on admiration. They are the links that identify conscience with simple selfishness.[79]

Like many intellectuals Hegel could excuse evil, but hypocrisy revolted him. Evil can be explained. Hypocrisy must be unmasked.[80] He agreed with Pascal that the undisguised sinner is only partially evil. He avoids, but does not tarnish goodness. He does not confuse good with evil; he merely turns his back upon the former. Hypocrisy, on the other hand, soils goodness by exploiting it to cover up evil. It is an injury to and an abuse of the very idea of the good.[81] In the *Phenomenology* Hegel only hinted at his loathing for hypocrisy, but in the *Philosophy of Right* he gave free rein to his feelings. There are no pages more vivid than these in any of his works. One can hardly blame him. For he realized that in the modern age hypocrisy had not merely altered in extent, but in character. It had become a total environment, not just a common failing. In an earlier age La Rochefoucault could still laugh at hypocrisy as 'the compliment vice pays virtue', but he was only dealing with the naive hypocrisy of a Tartuffe. Molière's hero, after all, just pretends to be more pious than other people in order to cover up his wicked schemes. Tartuffe's hypocrisy was merely one form of unctuous fraud among many others. Modern hypocrisy, if it resembles anything known to the past, is most like the Probabilism of the Jesuit which Pascal had hated so deeply. This was the obnoxious proposition that any apparently immoral behaviour could be excused if some orthodox authority could be found anywhere that would seem to permit it. And some legitimate Christian authority always could be discovered, with a little effort, to provide some sort of justification. Modern hypocrisy dispenses with this reliance on authority. If it is possible, and it always is, to claim that one is following one's own conscience, one's actions must be judged to be dutiful. There is, moreover, an internalized Machiavellism here that covers even the most criminal actions. The maxim that the end justifies the means is applied here to justify any sort of crime as long as it can be said to promote some noble personal ideal. In short, men of 'deep convictions' may get away with murder.[82]

Conscience is utterly incapable of curing the moral disease that it generates. The more it rails against hypocrisy, the more it encourages the vice. For what can conscience do but demand an ever more complete reliance on its own supremacy and inwardness? Yet it is this very appeal that forces one into hypocrisy.[83] The upshot is that no one is much concerned with hypocrisy any longer. It is the mark of our shallow age that hypocrisy is accepted as the inherent condition of our moral life. It is not the least mark of Hegel's intelligence to have noticed this novel character of his and our world. For unlike cynics, old and new, he did not simply point to this or that example of hypocrisy. He showed that hypocrisy had become a logical and psychological necessity of moral life. When people are continually encouraged to follow nothing but the inner voice of conscience without regard to social conventions or to the

consequences of their conduct, they must deceive themselves and each other. The dissociated conscience is doomed to this by its very principle which cannot admit that good actions can come from knowing and following social rules or even one's own intelligently calculated interests. These may well, in fact, inform conscience, but conscience can never admit that, and so, it lies. Moreover, the struggle for mutual recognition is under these conditions bound to be interminable. For no conscience can submit itself to another. The quest for recognition fails in the face of the rigid autocracy of each conscience. No 'we' emerges.

The profound discomfort of this condition proves intolerable. To alleviate it conscience now refuses to translate itself into action altogether. Instead it finds satisfaction in judging the conduct of others. Passivity protects one against the pain of moral insufficiency. How much easier to turn a self-righteous eye upon the activities of other men! One's own sense of duty is satisfied by expressing fine sentiments and avoiding the hazards of action. Under the banner of 'duty for duty's sake' one need perform no deeds. Instead one can occupy oneself with scrutinizing the deeds of others. By carefully analysing the motives of those who act the hypocrite one can easily find that ambition or love of fame or some other selfishness lies at the root of their works.[84] This moralistic reductionism is not only mean-spirited; it is also paralysing. Its final success would bring a reign of pure verbiage upon us all.

The man of action who is confronted by this nagging moralism defends himself by confessing. He admits that all actions involve some evil and the responsibility for evil. He expects the judging consciousness to admit its own limitations in turn. For the frankly evil man, in confessing, recognizes that there is a language that can reconcile conscience and action. It is the language of shared, public responsibility, not that of personal conviction or of self-cultivation. The 'beautiful soul', however, in its hardness rejects the offer. It does not recognize that it has any fault to confess, that it is anything less than perfect in its self-absorbed passivity. It refuses to recognize the baseness of a stance that criticizes others without ever daring to act. The language of inner purity saves the hypocrite from such risks, and he rejects the invitation of the man of action who speaks of his deeds in terms of public values and public necessities. The hypocrite refuses to join the common fate and the shared language of mankind. He thinks that with this refusal he can somehow escape from the world of history and the demands of public communication. The evil man is left to cope with these and must in addition bear the moralistic censure of the hard-hearted hypocrite. The latter chooses to remain above politics, above necessity, above action, above everything, in fact, except his perfect, private inner motives. Since no action can ever escape his judgment, this base valet knows that there are no heroes. That is because he is a valet, however, and mean, not because there really are no heroes.

The man of action who confesses his faults, who says, 'I am so' and dares not to act, may very well be a hero. He knows that history demands this of men. It is the moral valet who does not understand that the judgment of history, that 'master and lord of every deed and over all reality', does not judge according to moralistic rules. It does not search out motives, but actions and actions done openly and collectively by men joined together in common enterprises.[85]

Only when the judging consciousness recognizes its own partiality, its one-sidedness in the face of the collective life of mankind, is its hard heart broken. It also confesses, recognizes that action is not simply bad, and ceases to judge men in terms of private motives. It learns to see them as part of a public whole. With that reciprocal recognition becomes possible. The hypocrite sees that in his self-centredness he was just like the evil man, and the two are now reconciled.[86] This mutual forgiveness is not an act of Christian love. It is rather a return to the fraternity of those who know that because they are men nothing human is alien to them. The reconciliation of conscience and action, or of the self and the world, is not a religious phenomenon. Hegel had already recognized in an earlier essay that Christian forgiveness of sins is not a tolerable solution to evil. It takes men entirely out of this world, especially out of society with its claims and duties. In this it abandoned itself to ineffectuality.[87] The fraternity for which Hegel longed was less fragile and less 'figurative' than any religious ideal. It does not wait for a Beyond. It is realized as a necessity of the intellect in its life here and now.[88] Hegel called the act in which private conscience and public activity recognize each other 'self-consciousness'. It is when men fully understand that they are parts of a shared history that they come to see that the subjective 'I' is an incomplete self. In recognizing each other the man who acts and the man who judges really discover their identity as men. They recognize their common social character. In 'the spiritual daylight' of the present the 'I' discovers that it is half of a 'we'. Each 'I' is a necessary part of the whole development that has brought them to this point, but now it is a genuinely new self that really knows its own history and structure.[89]

This reconciliation of the moralistic valet and the active hero is really the victory of the latter. It is the intellectual triumph of action over passivity. As such it is clearly a recurrence of that earlier combat between the contemplative master and his productive slave.[90] Now, however, the hero-master is active while the valet-servant is passive. This reversal of social roles is not entirely insignificant. For the slave never succeeds in liberating himself wholly. He forces his master to recognize their common humanity, but the Stoicism that they now share does not affirm the primacy of productive action. It is a mere flight from actuality. The 'yes' that the hero wrings from the valet is a far more decisive and complete victory for the principle of ethical action. The merely judging consciousness

of the valet is eliminated. In making his 'confession' the hero only gives up his evil self-centredness, but not action or the passions which inspire it. The valet gives up reflective morality, which is all that he brought to this struggle for recognition.

In the confrontation between master and slave Hegel had challenged one of the most fundamental assumptions of classical thought: the superiority of theoretical over practical reason, and above all, of thought over work. In the second round, between hero and valet, he struck even more deeply, by asserting the superiority of passion over reason. For as he was to note later, 'nothing great has been and nothing great can be accomplished without passions'. Since 'impulse and passion are the very life-blood of all action', only the dead and hypocritical inveigh against passion as such.[91] Indeed, since men are the totality of their acts and must be judged accordingly, 'The true being of a man is . . . his act, individuality is real in the deed.' It is not to be found, as both moral and descriptive psychologists claim, in something behind or underneath human action.[92] The worth of acts, above all, does not rest on the unknown and unknowable states of mind that may inspire them. All that can be safely said is that without passions, impulses and personal interests no deeds, great or small, would ever occur at all. 'The true intrinsic worth' of these feelings depends on whether the actions to which they give rise conform to the ethical demands of society, above all to prevailing law.[93] In short, what matters is the contribution that the passions make to social life, and to Hegel it seemed evident that it was greater than that of reflective reason. It was thus specifically against Socrates and Kant that he argued when he claimed that '[a] passion, as for example, love, ambition, is the universal itself, as it is self-realizing not in perception, but in activity . . . [For] the individual the universal is his own interest'.[94] This is Hegel at his most radical. Not just subjectivity, rational or irrational, and not only the primacy of moral reason are at stake. The very structure of the individual psyche is here forced off the centre of the philosophical stage, to be replaced by social rationality. It is the social function of passion and action that raise them above individual reason. Whatever the place of reflective reason may be in the individual soul, it does not inspire action. Moreover its divisiveness and its isolating force, as much as its passivity, render private reason socially irrational.

Fraternity does not flourish among ratiocinating men. Indeed, it is reason both moral and analytical that inspires the malicious habit of looking for the flawed motives of actions. It keeps us from our fellow men, whom we passively observe and judge. Reasoning paralyses and dissociates men. That is the lesson of Socrates' life and of Kantian moralism. Shaking as this harsh rejection of traditional philosophic attitudes may seem, it comes as no surprise to readers of the *Phenomenology*. For Hegel had made it plain enough at its very beginning that he did not

think of philosophy as his great predecessors had conceived it. The task of philosophy was no longer one of calm contemplation, nor was it a wholly individual effort. Not only is truth a 'bacchanalian revel where not a member is sober', but it is a collective state of awareness, the 'we' that Hegel called 'self-consciousness'.[95] Self-consciousness knows truth to be what is 'recognized' as such, here and now, by other men. It also knows that its pursuit, philosophy, cannot find its model in the serenity of pure mathematics, syllogistic logic or the stars above us. Its real model is that other celebration of Bacchus, the tragic drama in all its turbulence and with all its power to purify. For only at the end when philosophy can look back upon its completed development, when we recognize the necessity of all that has occurred, does it attain the resignation of knowledge. Only then is there a semblance of what was once known as reason.[96]

CONSCIENCE IN THE WORLD

What place, if any, is left for conscience in this philosophy? The *Phenomenology* offers no answer to this question. Certainly it does not even suggest a political solution. The moral point of view is itself an evasion of politics, but beyond it there is only general toleration and an acceptance of social necessity. That is not much of an alternative. It is good medicine for hypocrisy, but hardly a serious answer to Kantian morality. This, one is forced to conclude, is the best that post-Athenian Europe can do.[97] The reconciliation of conscience and action thus provides a rather abrupt end to the entire discussion. Then a wholly new topic, religion, follows quite suddenly. It is not until the *Philosophy of Right* that we discover that it is the task of the state to define social norms and to set an appropriate sphere for morality. This would in itself suffice to make that work the missing section of the *Phenomenology*. Hegel, in any case, made it clear in numerous references that he meant these two works to be read together. That is especially evident of the pages devoted to morality. They add nothing to the earlier assault on morality, but as Hegel quite explicity noted, the sections on the transition from morality to ethics differed from, though they remained entirely consistent with, the corresponding passages in the *Phenomenology*. In fact there really was no 'transition' there at all, and the *Philosophy of Right* fills a gaping hole. Whether it is a satisfactory filling is, however, very much open to doubt.[98] For when all is said and done, Hegel leaves us with a conscience that is a private luxury to be enjoyed as long as it does not interfere with convention and law.

Hegel frequently insisted on the sacredness and inviolability of the inner moral realm. Legislation cannot and should not try to touch it.[99] The law cannot make us moral, and any scheme to do so is a denial of

the freedom of men as men. However, this very internality of conscience allowed him to limit its scope and indeed to imprison it. When conscience expresses itself in word and deed its content is subject to objective standards. And 'ought' is, without qualification, in a people's spirit. That is where our duties are set for us.[100] Just as there can be no private truth in science, so there can be no private moral knowledge. The truth of science is public knowledge, and so is true knowledge of right and wrong.[101] With that in mind it comes as no great surprise that Hegel's 'true conscience' bears only scant resemblance to what anyone else has ever meant by conscience.[102] To be sure, no truth, scientific or moral, is true for a person unless he recognizes it as such. However, what he 'ought' to know is what public knowledge recognizes as truth. In morality that means that conscience has no true knowledge as long as it remains private. It becomes true only if it completely internalizes and expresses public values. The level of the 'ethical' is attained when the generally prevailing norms are also subjectively accepted. That is true freedom as contrasted to that false freedom which is illusory because it is only a form of ignorance. Conscience shorn of its supremacy, however, looks a good deal more like public spirit, conventionality or simply submission to necessity than like moral freedom. It is resignation and it is free only to the degree that the individual may indeed choose freely to reject other possibilities open to him or indeed decide to act foolishly or wrongly.

This view of 'true' conscience goes well beyond the political and legal limits that society imposes upon conscience. It is not just that the state cannot condone crime and illegality simply because these may have been motivated by a 'pure' heart and some personal notion of duty. It also implies more than saying, as Hegel said of Socrates' trial, that in cases of conflict private conscience must yield to public conscience. The latter, as expressed by a judge, is the 'privileged conscience' because it speaks for the public and acts on behalf of public values and interests.[103] That is not a judgment on the truth and inherent content of conscience. It deals only with one problem, that of conflict. The modern state, Hegel argued, is so much less fragile than the ancient city just because it can allow, and even integrate men through, the free play of private interests and opinions short of this ultimate confrontation. It is not threatened by private conscience, indeed respects it. It decides only the outermost limits of personal morality. The modern state thrives on an atomized society. Nevertheless 'true conscience' or a morality that has reached ethics actually does demand a partial return to antiquity. It is a self-conscious effort to adopt the spirit that prevailed spontaneously and unreflectively in the ancient city. Morality that seeks objectivity finds ethics and the harmony of all individual and public values.[104] This transition is, moreover, one that must be seen as liberating, because it is an escape from the vacuum of duty for duty's sake and the prison of duty done against inclination.

We would be doing both what we *know* to be 'true' and *feel* to be desirable because it allows us to act without guilt. For only the law can define, give a meaning to and determine the character of our acts. The 'you shall not kill' of pure duty is empty, as we saw. Not every killing is murder, for example. Only the law can tell us what acts performed under what conditons are and are not murder.[105] Hegel claimed more, however, than that conscience cannot compete with or replace the law in determining criminality and illegality at any given moment in time. Nor is he merely saying the obvious, that law and obedience to it enhances liberty by securing the rights of all individuals. 'True conscience' has only one function: to convince each person of the objective rightness, 'the truth', of convention and of law.

The 'transition' from morality to ethics means then that conscience freely accepts that our duties are set for us by society and that their performance calls for an accommodating attitude to need and passion, since without these we cannot act at all. In this process conscience is not forced in any way, but it raises itself to social objectivity. Is all this just another way of saying with Hobbes that 'private consciences are but private opinions'? Is subjective conviction ultimately irrelevant, since the morality of our actions must be judged solely by public standards? The identification of ethical and scientific knowledge as forms of public knowledge would suggest just such a conclusion. But Hegel was not Hobbes, if only because he had a far greater sense of history. Certainly he was not capable of simply wishing all those centuries of Christian morality away. We cannot expect to return to the spontaneous ethical harmony of pagan Greece, nor can we simply start anew with a slate clean for utilitarian calculation. Subjectivity is here to stay. Private conscience must be recognized as a necessary right. If it were not such a right it could not enter into real conflict with the claims of ethics and of the state. And Hegel certainly recognized that such conflicts were genuine. Though at any given moment private conscience must yield to public authority, that does not even mean that the weaker claim is necessarily 'wrong'. In the long historical run Socrates proved to be right. With the necessity of conflicting realms of obligation, only history has the last word. Its judgments allow no appeal. Now retrospection is not a practical help to the individual in doubt about his duty, and it is difficult to see why Hegel thought he had more to offer him than Kant had.[106]

Where then can conscience find a place in which it can exercise its rights? Hegel decided finally that 'civil society' was to be its home.[107] That solution does settle the problem of the 'formal', that is legally protected, rights of conscience. It also deeply degrades conscience. Conscience is here put on the same footing as private need and greed. However, as we saw, Hegel had already identified conscience with these. Civil society is the arena where men fulfil not only their most selfish aims

but all their purely private ends. It is *the* free market. This is where we strive for happiness, material well-being, personal ambition and morality. Indeed as Hegel remarked, one must hope ironically, there is so much occasion here to perform one's moral duties. And to be sure if one wants to be altruistic there is plenty of opportunity here to be so. This might, however, as Hegel seems to have forgotten, interfere destructively with the true purposes of civil society. For this is where the invisible hand operates to bind men together. It is passion and selfishness, as we saw, that really tie men to each other, integrate them into a social whole and make them serve society even though each one is pursuing his personal gains. In fact, Hegel hoped that morality might mitigate the harshness of civil society. It has its place there, in any case, because that is the realm of individual freedom in which all men's rights are realized under the protection of the state. It assumes that its denizens, the bourgeoisie being apolitical, and indeed politically utterly incompetent, will find their fulfilment moral and material there and recognize their dependence on the state.[108] When morality recognizes the advantages of this situation it rises to ethical consciousness and freedom and necessity are reconciled.

By making morality a part of the rights enjoyed in civil society Hegel found a formula for protecting the rights of conscience as well as for depoliticizing them. Morality is private indeed, but it is offered a sphere of social action. And even if it engenders conflicts in civil society, these never reach the level of politics. Civil society is a realm where conflict is not only inevitable, but may even strengthen the state. That is why the state can tolerate this all but unbridled individualism. It is not merely harmless; it removes every incentive for political self-assertion by satisfying every private urge, from economic need to morality. Indeed the modern state, because it embraces and protects individual freedom. is far more resilient than the polis, which could not endure or survive serious subjective self-assertion. In the modern state self-interest and patriotism are united. Individuals know that the pursuit of their tangible and ideal interests is indissolubly tied to the state and its laws.[109] Nevertheless this structure is not perfect. It has no citizens. In discussing Aristotle's *Politics* Hegel noted that the Greeks had no notion of civil society. They 'were still unacquainted with the abstract right of our modern states, that isolates the individual, allows of his acting as such, and yet as an invisible spirit holds all its parts together'.[110] In the modern state no individual can ever be fully conscious of the whole to which he contributes, quite in spite of himself, by projecting his individuality. It is exactly like a factory, Hegel added. The freedom of such men is that of the 'bourgeois', not that of the 'citizen'. The modern state is so much less fragile than the ancient city just because it does not depend on anything as difficult to achieve as full citizenship. It can thrive with its stunted bourgeois. And stunted they are. Hegel was very much aware of

that. Man for man they were simply inferior to the free citizens who knew their entire city and their place in it. That is why they had to possess character and not mere knowledge, as Aristotle had long ago pointed out to Plato.[111] Morality as the conscious knowledge of right and wrong is, to be sure, an advance towards human freedom, but it is learned at a great cost – the loss of spontaneous and complete citizenship. Civil society and the state are to be cherished, but as necessities, not as perfections. As Hegel had noted when he first began to consider Germany's political condition: there was now only the choice between the modern state and the helplessness of the Jews of the diaspora.[112] It is the best we can do without Athens.

If Hegel did not find it easy to reconcile himself to subjective morality in general, he had special difficulties with one of its chief manifestations: the bad conscience. The kind of guilt to which the moralistic consciousness in its rigour condemns itself seemed like perpetual self-punishment to him. And a punishment without inner purification and reconciliation to other men was, in Hegel's view, intolerably cruel and interminably so. When the 'evil' hero 'confesses' he is asking for reconciliation. In rejecting the fraternal hand the judging valet demonstrates the harshness and the narrowness of conscience as a form of punitive justice. His is also a most abject form of servitude. For a human being whose inclinations are forever being crushed by his sense of duty 'carries his lord in himself, yet at the same time he is his own slave'.[113] One half of him is continually judging and punishing the other, and Kant's account of a bad conscience is, in its way, just as terrible as the wrath of the Lord.[114] Unable to be at one with himself, the man of conscience is quite incapable of embracing the man who embodies all those active impulses which he denies and punishes in himself. He may in fact not even quite understand the meaning of the hero's confession. It is not a demand for justice or even for pardon. When the hero confesses, 'I am so', he admits that his acts had been evil and by that very act submits again to the rules he had rejected. This is neither humility nor self-abasement, but a return to the communal rules. Knowing that he excommunicated himself by his acts of wrongful self-assertion he is now ready to return to human fellowship. His confession is an act of self-purification, which should put his conscience to rest and signal his fitness for the world of mutual rights and obligations.[115] The past is wiped out.

As we saw Hegel was very far from proposing Christian forgiveness of sins as a remedy for the self-destructive extremity evoked by the rigours of Jewish and Kantian legalism. The stiff-necked valet who personifies the flaws of that sort of justice with all its harsh externality is not asked to love, and there is no suggestion here that justice according to law is dispensable. On the contrary, justice must be preserved even though we must go beyond it. The only aspect of the Christian attenuation of justice

that Hegel admired was the possibility of purging oneself of guilt by acts of confession. To be sure, the hero confesses not to a deity, but to other men, and without any loss of human dignity. The meaning of the confession is similar: the sinner is reconciled to the good, but it is now a human, not a divine goodness. Above all, he is at one with himself.

Legal justice in punishing the criminal cannot directly reintegrate him into society. It can, however, wipe the slate clean and leave his integrity intact. The criminal should remember that he is the architect of his own fate, that he activated the punitive law by committing the crime. He can even escape coercion by suicide or some sort of inner withdrawal. Moreover, the coercion he suffers must not go beyond the original crime.[116] The necessity of punishment according to law, however, remains. It emerges directly from the law which the criminal offends by injuring another person. The law must demand that he lose the rights comprised in the law he has rejected. Punishment is by definition deserved and the criminal law therefore 'cannot forego punishment, cannot be merciful'. To do so would be arbitrary and unjust. Justice must be unbending. It cannot forgive and forget. What has happened cannot be undone by forgiveness, and punishment must follow the wrongful deed. As far as the law is concerned that is all there is to it. The criminal is a person who must be punished, and once justice has taken its course the law has done with him.[117] For the criminal as a human being, however, the matter cannot end there. His responsibility *to* the law may have been fulfilled once he has been punished, but his responsibility *for* the crime remains to haunt him.[118] As far as he is concerned the punishing agency, whether it be his own bad conscience or another being, has only afflicted him unless he can by confessing reconcile himself to his fate and to society. God and Kant's bad conscience make the sinner suffer and abase himself, as Abraham did, by sacrificing what is dearest to him. It is a crushing expiation that does not purify or liberate.[119] However just the infliction of the pain may have been, it remains an external force visited upon an uncomprehending man. As such it continues to hover over him as a threat, for he has not really been altered by the punishment. In his own eyes he remains a trespasser, one who is still subject to that hostile arm of the law within him or without. Such a condition is an open invitation to recidivism. For the criminal feels that the law has passed unconditional judgment upon him, and he now is defined once and for all as a criminal. He is a criminal who has been punished, but he is still a criminal in his own eyes and in those of his fellow men who, like the valet, will not reconsider justice. Neither legal punishment nor punitive conscience can reconcile the criminal to himself or heal his self-inflicted wounds. Yet neither law nor conscience can be abolished or even altered. What can be done is to think of punishment in a different way, to look upon it not

only as an act of justice, but also as a fate which one has aroused and must now accept.[120]

If we could think of punishment as a necessary fate, rather than as a master, then we might well become reconciled to ourselves and to the law. Here again Hegel was recalling the spirit of ancient Athens as revealed in tragedy. When Orestes and Oedipus, and even modern Macbeth, commit their various crimes, they are rebelling against fate. They arouse an enemy against themselves. By destroying life they bring the furies down upon themselves, whether in the form of the avenging sisters or of Banquo's ghost. Even later, when fate is no longer envisaged like this, but as one's own character, the fury of remorse and grief rage within the tragic hero. However, in either case he knows that he is faced with necessity and accepts it. He does not deny his responsibility for his acts or the inevitability of what follows. He accepts fate. It is so. The sorrow and regret that torment him, moreover, can be shaken off. There are several things a tragic hero could do. He might commit suicide to find forgetfulness in death. No judging god awaits him. He might expiate his crime and put the furies to rest as Orestes does with Athena's help, or as Oedipus does in a mystical rite at Colonus.[121] At no time is he accountable to other people. That is why this sort of hero cannot exist once a civic order has been established.[122] The possibility of thinking of the criminal law as fate, as a sort of necessity, however, remains.

The ability to think of punishment as fated depends not on our circumstances but on our ability to rise above subjectivity and its isolation. The Greek who knew necessity and said 'it is so', 'it cannot be helped', did not need consolation. For necessity is not coercion, and it is not a tyrant or something imposed at all. It is simply inescapable reality. It cannot oppress once it is truly accepted. That is why the Greeks were never vexed as we always are. The reverent sense of necessity led the Greeks to create themselves into noble and beautiful characters. They internalized necessity; they made no effort to escape it. We, in glaring contrast, never say 'it is so', but always 'it ought to be so', and are always petulant and dissatisfied with ourselves, thanks to bad conscience, to the fear of God and of law all seen as wilful masters over our selves. The necessity of Greek fate had nothing to do with the chain of cause and effect. That also is experienced as a loss of freedom and thus a source of frustration for which we require continual consolation. Real necessity is not an explanation.[123] It is the sheer 'is-ness' of reality as given. Conscience that makes us feel that we are complete moral failures unless we are ascetic supermen is simply unrealistic. It defies actuality and makes self-acceptance impossible just as it renders men harsh towards each other. Hegel was not Nietzsche, to be sure, and he was not summoning us to a realm beyond good and evil, but he did recognize the psychological possibility of being neither amoral nor guilt ridden.

The Greeks set us an example, but we cannot ever be anything like them again. They lacked that infinite subjective morality which attaches absolute rights to men as men. We must continue to live as free moral agents endowed with a conscience. They were free without understanding their own freedom, and even their reconciliation to fate was an unreflective response. It was simply a part of a socially shared, spontaneously acquired disposition, and not recognized as individual moral decision. That is why expiation could be achieved by purely external public acts of purification. We need more. Only a personal inner rejection of our immoral acts can return us to an easy conscience. Confession is the outward sign of that inner conversion. It means that we have punished ourselves and are now back at our original position, at one with ourselves and with the demands of morality. The criminal law should be looked upon in the same way. Its punishment, once it has unavoidably given the criminal his just deserts, has wiped out his faults. He has paid the debt he owed, as he must, now he is a free member of society again.

The changes that this memory of Greek fatalism suggested to Hegel are not social. They are highly personal. He was really concerned with the individual and his ability to survive conscience and the law. Fate is a state of mind, the word for all that is inherent in the situation and character of men as *both* free individuals and as a part of a greater whole, of society and then of history. We are free, for we may choose to be good, but need not be. We are likely to fall short of goodness because the demands of action and passion are not the same as those of pure morality. Evil is always possible, and we must impute responsibility for it to individuals. Innocence is not even the condition of children, only of stones.[124] Our real fate is to know that we are free to be good or bad. It calls not for blind forgiveness, but for a more realistic view of our possibilities. At the very least we owe each other a mutual recognition of this as our common, shared state. Once we do that tolerance and a willingness to accept confession must follow. That is what the valet, enslaved by his own conscience, will not do with his pretentious holier-than-thou attitude.

The universal liability to evil is, of course, not the same as original sin or criminality. Criminality is only an exception unlike moral failure. Hegel found, therefore, relatively little amiss with Kant's idea of justice as retribution, though he was determined to render it far less harsh in practice. Certainly he had no more use than Kant had for utilitarian theories of punishment. They only treat a man as a animal to be tamed, not as a free being who chose to be punished when he committed a crime.[125] Punishment is what is due to a free and rational person. Anything less is to show a lack of respect for the criminal as a human being. However, Hegel was much too practical to believe that one must resort to the *lex talionis* in order to avoid arbitrariness. Only in cases of murder

could the punishment be the same as the criminal act, and Hegel did not rejoice in this symmetry. He evidently looked with hope towards an increasing mildness and rarity of punishment.[126] Like Bentham, he was far less upset by judicial discretion than by the machinations of lawyers who so obscure the law that citizens cannot know it. He also thought publicity and knowledge of the law a better protection against arbitrariness than a rigid table of punishment.[127] There was, finally, one aspect of Greek fatalism which he rejected altogether. The responsibility of the tragic hero encompassed far more than is now tolerable. He was responsible for what he did in ignorance and by accident as well as for all the most remote consequences of his acts. Modern responsibility is more restricted. We hold a man accountable only for what he intended to do under circumstances that he could have known and for only the predictable consequences of his deeds.[128] The Greek view is wholly incompatible with our sense of subjective and personal responsibility, and this was one of the many aspects of individualism Hegel was no more ready to abandon than was Kant.

In both substance and tone Hegel's was a deeply individualistic attitude. In fact, he was far more concerned with the criminal and his rights as a person than Kant had been. Neither justice as an imperative of reason nor the welfare of society moved him to forget that even evil men are human beings. Fatalism as an invitation to reconciliation is meant to help the criminal. He is urged to confess and courts are to honour his confession. It is a sign of his acceptance of the fate he, and he alone, has brought upon himself.[129] Hegel was one of the least cruel philosophers. He already knew as Nietzsche was to say that 'the categorical imperative smells of cruelty'.[130] But quite unlike that later lover of the Greeks, he was not tempted by illusions about some future return of the heroes who would replace modern with ancient bloodiness. Self-reconciliation is not a denial of conscience or freedom, but a relief from its excessive demands, its anarchism and hypocrisy, all of which are burdens to men in their personal no less than social capacity. It does away with the torments of an ought that never is and replaces it with rules that we can live with less painfully and more sociably.

Hegel was often less than fair and generally petty in his criticisms of Kant. Surely Kant was not just another eighteenth-century natural law theorist, nor was he given to hypocrisy. The moralistic point of view is a caricature of practical reason. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see that Hegel was not merely intent upon destroying personal morality. He tried rather to soften it with a sense of fraternity which would allow us to be more self-accepting and tolerant of each other. That is the final meaning of self-consciousness, of the awareness of each self that is an expression of a 'we'. The moral 'I' is not destroyed; it only gives up its isolation and aloofness from others. At the end of Hegel's *Phenomenology* his

picture of the human spirit is clear. It is not the psyche of a social animal, but of self-aware and active men in a state of indissoluble communion with each other, past and present.

Notes

Note: in these notes B. refers to *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, tr. J. B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1949): H. to *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952).

1 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate', *Early Theological Writings*, ed. and tr. T. M. Knox and R. Kroner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 211.

2 B. 107; H. 41.

3 B. 479–80; H. 328–9.

4 B. 609–10, 613–14; H. 421–4. Moral individualism was an eccentricity on Socrates' part. Now it is 'part and parcel of the self-consciousness of everyone', but historical timeliness is not all. Kant's philosophy of duty has 'a loftiness of outlook' that gives it a merit in its own right. *Philosophy of Right*, tr. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 274, 254 (Addition to § 274 and 133); *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, ed. and tr. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1894), III, 458.

5 B. 498–9; H. 342.

6 Cicero's most obvious modern heirs were Kant's Scottish contemporaries who also took their cue from healthy common sense. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, 92–3, II, 257–76; III, 361–3, 375–9.

7 B. 441–5; H. 302–6.

8 *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York: Hafner, 1948), 335–6.

9 B. 440–2; H. 301–3.

10 B. 442–3; H. 303–4.

11 B. 443–4; H. 304–5.

12 B. 444–5, 289; H. 305–6, 189–90.

13 *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings on Moral Philosophy*, tr. L. W. Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 135.

14 B. 446–7; H. 306–7.

15 Unless otherwise stated all Hegel's references to Kant's theory of property are aimed at Part I of *The Metaphysics of Ethics (Die Metaphysik der Sitten)*. It is most readily available, even though in very abbreviated form, as *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, tr. and ed. John Ladd (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 51–67.

16 B. 448–9; H. 307–8.

17 B. 450–2; H. 310–11.

18 B. 452–3; H. 311–12. *Philosophy of Right*, 90, 254 (§ 135, Addition to § 135).

19 *The Metaphysical Principle of Virtue* (Part II of *Metaphysik der Sitten*), tr. James Ellington (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 80–1, 90–3; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 154.

20 *Principles of Virtue*, 52–3, 60–1, 112–18; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 189.

21 *Critique of Practical Reason*, 138; *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ibid., 80–3.

22 All of Hegel's early writings contain passages devoted to this contrast. The difference between modern society and the polis as it emerges from the pages of Aristotle seems to have been present in his mind whenever he came to discuss Kant and Fichte; for example, 'Über die wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts', *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. George Lasson (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1913), 327–416. I am not in this essay concerned with the development of Hegel's ideas and their culmination in the *Phenomenology*. The issue is raised only to explain that there was an historical basis for the otherwise inexplicable jump from Kant to Sophocles.

23 B. 614; H. 424.

24 B. 615; H. 424–5.

25 B. 615–16; H. 425–6.

26 Kant *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, tr. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper, 1960), 46.

27 B. 620, 289; H. 428–9, 189–90.

28 *Religion Within the Limits*, 31–2.

29 ibid., 46.

30 ibid., 43–4.

31 ibid., 50–2.

32 ibid., 41–2.

33 B. 616–19, 631–2; H. 426–8; 435–7.

34 B. 619–20, 632–6; H. 428–9, 435–40.

35 B. 620; H. 428–9.

36 B. 621–4, 639; H. 429–32, 442.

37 B. 626; H. 433.

38 B. 637; H. 441.

39 *Religion Within the Limits*, 3.

40 ibid., 5–6; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 119, 189–90, 227–34, 246–9.

41 *Religion Within the Limits*, 90–1.

42 ibid., 130.

43 ibid., 49, 70.

44 B. 630; H. 435.

45 B. 640; H. 443–9.

46 B. 631; H. 436.

47 B. 641; H. 444.

48 *Religion Within the Limits*, 37–8, 168, 176–7, 186.

49 The one sentence of Kant that Hegel seems never to have read, the most moving in all philosophy perhaps closes the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*: 'And so we do not indeed comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative; yet we do comprehend its incomprehensibility which is all that can be fairly demanded of a philosophy which in its principles strives to reach the limits of human reason.' loc. cit., 117.

50 Hegel professed to be able to see no difference between the moral philosophies of Kant and Fichte – a strange blindness. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, 503–4.

51 B. 641; H. 44.

52 Fichte, *The Science of Ethics*, tr. A. E. Kroeger (New York: Appleton, 1897), 164.

53 ibid., 174.

54 ibid., 178–9.

55 ibid., 245–6.

56 ibid., 262.

57 *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1955), 63.
58 *Philosophy of Right*, 91, 137, 272 (§ 137, 213 with Additions § 213).
59 B. 647; H. 447–8.
60 B. 648; H. 449.
61 B. 649; H. 449.
62 ibid.
63 B. 650–1; H. 450–1.
64 B. 98–9, 273–6, 577–8; H. 33–4, 176–8, 397–8.
65 B. 653–4; H. 452–3.
66 B. 654–5; H. 453–4. See also the entire section dealing with Socrates in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, 384–448.
67 B. 654; H. 453.
68 Fichte, *Science of Ethics*, 315–27; B. 654–5; H. 453–4.
69 B. 655–6; H. 454–5.
70 B. 656–7; H. 455.
71 B. 658; H. 456.
72 B. 659–60; H. 457.
73 B. 661; H. 458–9.
74 B. 661; H. 458.
75 B. 662; H. 459.
76 B. 340–2; H. 229–31.
77 B. 663–7; H. 460–3.
78 B. 667; H. 463.
79 *Enzyklopädie* (1830), ed. F. Nicolin and O. Pöggeler (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1959), *Philosophy of Right*, 90 (§ 135).
80 B. 668–9; H. 464–5.
81 *Philosophy of Right*, 94–5 (§ 140).
82 ibid., 93–103, 256–8 (§ 140 and Additions).
83 B. 669–71; H. 465–6.
84 B. 671–3; H. 466–7.
85 B. 673–6; H. 467–70; *Philosophy of Right*, 84 (§ 124).
86 B. 676–9; H. 470–2.
87 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate', loc. cit., 224–53.
88 B. 793–5; H. 552–4.
89 B. 226–31; H. 140–3.
90 See *infra*.
91 *Enzyclopädie*, § 474.
92 B. 349–50; H. 236–7; *Philosophy of Right*, 83–4 (§ 124). 'What the subject is, is the series of his actions.' The psychologists who forget that are all valets of the lowest kind.
93 *Enzyclopädie*, 474–5; *Philosophy of Right*, 161–2 (§ 261). 'In whatever way an individual may fulfil his duty, he must at the same time find his account therein and attain his personal interest and satisfaction.'
94 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I. 413.
95 B. 105, 225–31; H. 39, 140–3.
96 B. 144–5; H. 58–9.
97 Philosophy cannot solve the conflict between conscience and inclination, mind and life. It can only give insight into the essence of such cleavage and show that truth lies in reconciling the two simply by acting as common life demands in any case. *Philosophy of Fine Art*, tr. F. P. B. Osmaston (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), I, 75–6.

98 *Philosophy of Right*, 103 (§ 140), The *Enzyclopädie* also has a pattern similar to that of the *Philosophy of Right*.

99 *Philosophy of Right*, 33, 91–2, 245, 248 (§ 30, 137, Addition to § 94, 106).

100 *Enzyclopädie*, § 514.

101 *Philosophy of Right*, 91 (§ 137).

102 ibid., 103–4, 233–4 (§ 141, Addition to § 33).

103 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, 443.

104 *Philosophy of Right*, 87–9 (§ 132).

105 ibid., 84, 87–90, 134–5, 230 (§ 124, 132–5, 208–11, Addition to § 15); *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, 417–20, B. 446, H. 306.

106 *Philosophy of Right*, 34 (§ 30).

107 ibid., 133 (§ 207).

108 For Hegel's early and unaltered views on the political incompetence of the bourgeoisie see his essay on 'The German Constitution', tr. T. M. Knox, in Z. A. Pelczynski, *Hegel's Political Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 189–90, 202–5.

109 *Philosophy of Right*, 109, 132–3, 161–2, 280–1, § 154, 206, 261, Addition to § 260 and 265.

110 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, II, 209–10.

111 ibid., I, 414.

112 'The German Constitution', loc. cit., 242.

113 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate', loc. cit., 211.

114 See *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, 100–3.

115 B. 673–7; H. 468–71.

116 *Enzyclopädie*, § 501.

117 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate', loc. cit., 224–8.

118 Alfred Schutz in an essay, 'Some Equivocations in the Notion of Responsibility', draws a distinction between responsibility 'for' and 'to' that corresponds to and illuminates the contrast between heroic and civic guilt in Hegel. *Collected Papers* (the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), II, 274–6.

119 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. and tr. E. B. Speirs and J. B. Sanderson (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), II, 219.

120 'Christianity and its Fate', loc. cit., 226–39.

121 B. 487–93, 739–43; H. 334–7, 513–16; *Philosophy of Fine Art*, IV, 320–6.

122 *Philosophy of Right*, 245 (Addition to § 93).

123 *Philosophy of Religion*, II, 239–43, 256–67, 287–8.

124 B. 488; H. 334; *Enzyclopädie*, § 472; *Philosophy of Religion*, I, 272–85; III, 60–2.

125 *Philosophy of Right*, 69–71, 141 (§ 99, 100, 220).

126 ibid., 71–3, 140, 246–7, 274 (§ 101, 218, Addition to § 100, 218).

127 *Philosophy of Right*, 134–45 (§ 211–28); Bentham, *Of Laws in General*, ed. H. L. A. Hart (London: Athlone Press, 1970), 71, 193–5, 236–41. Both Bentham and Hegel found Caligula particularly objectionable.

128 ibid., 80–1, 250–1, (§ 117, 118, Additions to § 117, 118); *Philosophy of Fine Art*, IV, 319–21.

129 *Enzyclopädie*, § 500–1; *Philosophy of Right*, 275 (Addition to § 227).

130 *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 65 (II, § 6).

Economic and social integration in Hegel's political philosophy

Raymond Plant

I

In this paper I want to argue that issues of political economy lie at the very centre of Hegel's particular concerns as a philosopher and that his general philosophical position so structures and governs his account of political economy that the latter cannot be understood fully or appreciated without taking his general philosophical position into account. In addition, I shall argue that Hegel's interest in problems of political economy can be traced back to his student days in Tübingen, and that an understanding of his development during this period and subsequently shows why political economy had to be for him a dominant intellectual concern. In arguing this thesis I hope to be able to say something briefly about Hegel's views, not just on political economy and its role generally but also on particular concepts drawn from this field – concepts such as need, labour, exchange, public authority and the state. It is only right that at the very beginning of this paper I should say just how indebted I am to the researches of Professor Paul Chamley in this area, particularly his two articles in *Hegel Studien* for 1965,[1] and also his books *Economie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel* and *Documents relatif à Sir James Steuart.*[2]

II

The first part of this paper will be concerned with the development of Hegel's views on political economy up to 1800, and I shall have to make as assumptions certain points of view argued more fully in my book, *Hegel.*[3] Having said that I wanted to place Hegel's theory of political economy at the centre of attention, it has to be admitted that there are

definite limits to the feasibility of such an enterprise. Not only did the mature Hegel hold that truth is the whole, so that an abstracted discussion of political economy would be inadequate, but the young Hegel, too, held an equally daunting view about the intricate interrelationships of social institutions and practices when he argues in his *Theologische Jugendschriften* that: 'The spirit of the people, its history, its religion, the level of its political development cannot be treated in isolation either with respect to their mutual influence, or in characterizing each by itself; they are woven together into a single bond.'[4] The same point would hold true for political economy, and the view is mirrored in the analysis of his development presented here: issues of religion, history, politics and economics are closely related in his mind.

In my *Hegel* I argued that Hegel's thought was dominated by two interrelated ideals: the restoration of some sense of wholeness and integrity to the individual personality; and the restructuring of society on a more harmonious, reciprocating basis, that is to restore some sense of community.[5] A crucial influence here on the formation of these ideals in the mind of Hegel, and indeed the minds of others of Hegel's generation,[6] was a romanticized and idealized picture of the ancient Greek and particularly Athenian polis. In such a society, so it was believed, a real sense of community had been achieved. Social practices and institutions such as religion, morality and politics were all closely interwoven, thus making the social system homogeneous. The individual citizen was able to develop a roundedness and wholeness to his personality by being able personally to take part in all these interwoven social activities, an integrity of the personality which has been denied to the modern man. For many, and for Hegel in particular in his early years, Greece was the ideal and, even when his enthusiasm for the Greek model had evaporated somewhat, he still extrapolated from Greek political culture a deep and abiding political conviction about the need for society to recover some sense of the harmony of Greece, albeit in its own and modified way, and to recover something of the sense of human wholeness which had been such a dominant part of Greek culture.[7]

While Hegel was preoccupied with these ideals relating both to society and the individual during this early period he does not seem to have been interested in exploring the material and economic conditions which enabled this kind of society to flourish in the ancient world and the changes in the material conditions of life which made such a form of communal life more difficult if not impossible to achieve in the modern world. On the contrary, during the period of his earliest writings in Tübingen (1789–93) Hegel seems to have seen *religion* as the key to the unified nature of Greek life and religious changes to have been the cause of the baneful structure of modern society. In Hegel's view Greek folk religion had been a unifying institution. It appealed to all the powers of

the human mind, to head and heart,[8] to the cognitive, conative and affective sides of the personality; whereas modern European religion has become too deeply rationalistic and theological, neglecting the need for religion to nourish the emotions, which Hegel regards at this time as the springs of moral life.[9] Because folk religion managed to appeal to the whole man, it encouraged a sense of personal wholeness and integration, but in addition it was a powerful force for harmony in society generally. All practices in society had a religious dimension and, as such, there were close connections between them mediated by this religious bond.[10] In its social function Greek folk religion was very different from modern Christianity, the practice of which has become a kind of specialism, reserved for special days of the week, involving specialized ceremonies and liturgical forms, with the result that it has become more and more dislocated from the forms of political life and social and moral relationships. The recapture of a sense of community, and with it the regeneration of modern life, is thus seen by Hegel at this period very much in terms of rediscovering something like Greek folk religion, largely by a fundamental reshaping of Christian beliefs and in particular by a rigorous attempt to demythologize the Gospels in order to exclude all elements of transcendence and positivity.

There is therefore very little in the Tübingen material to suggest that Hegel had an interest in the *material* conditions of life which constituted the environment within which forms of communal life could exist. However, there are two places in the Tübingen writings in which issues generally falling under the rubric of political economy are discussed: one deals with needs and labour; the other relates to the communistic tendencies of early Christianity and how these relate to the requirements of modern bourgeois life. The first passage, although long, is worth quoting in full as Chamley makes quite a good deal of it in his work on Hegel's economic beliefs:

> The father of this genius [i.e. Greek society] is Time on which he remains dependent all his life – his mother the polis, the constitution his midwife and religion his wet nurse, who took the five acts into her service to aid in his education – and the music of physical and spiritual motion – an ethereal essence – that is drawn down to earth and held fast by a light bond which resists through a magic spell all attempts to break it, for it is completely entwined in his essence. This bond whose main foundations are our needs is woven together from the manifold threads of nature; and because he [the Greek] binds himself to nature more firmly with every new thread, he is far from feeling any constraint that he finds an amplification of his enjoyment, or exclusion of his range of life in this voluntary augmentation, this multiplying variety of threads. . . . The brazen bond of his needs fetters him too to Mother

> Earth, but he worked it over, refined it, beautified it with feeling and fancy, twining it with roses by the aid of the Graces, so that he could delight in these fetters as his own work, as part of himself.[11]

One might interpret this puzzling passage somewhat as follows: the Greek, like every other man, is tied to the earth by the material conditions of human existence, the central one being the requirement that my basic needs be satisifed. However, the form of satisfaction may seem either self-imposed or alien, depending presumably upon the system of labour prevailing. In Greek society the way in which needs were satisfied, i.e. labour, was not seen as a constraint but as part of oneself, and thus labour became in turn the basis of the cultural life of the community. Chamley sees in this passage a clear echo of Hegel's reading of Locke during this period, particularly with the idea present in the passage that man externalizes himself in free labour and finds himself mixed with it and reflected in it.[12] Man binds himself more and more to nature by his multiplying needs and their satisfactions, but these do not appear as a positive constraint so much as an extension and a growing richness of life, unlike in modern life, where needs, he says, are 'iron fetters and raw'. At the same time man's natural environment is still considered benign; it is 'mother earth'. However, the passage is still very complex and difficult to attach any firm meaning to, but certainly Chamley's reading of the passage is consistent with it.

The other passage, not noted by Chamley, is on page 41 of the *Theologische Jugendschriften*, and it is interesting because it ties in with Hegel's religious preoccupations at the time. The passage occurs during a general attack on Christianity as inimical to human existence. He argues that many of the moral injunctions of Jesus are in opposition to values which Hegel holds dear: 'One also finds many commands of Christianity go against the basic presuppositions of legislation in bourgeois society, the basic propositions of the property owner's right to self-defence'. What Hegel does not go on to discuss until much later in his life is how such an atomistic-seeming form of social organization can generate forms of solidarity and interrelationship. At this point he does seem to be settled in the position of seeing religious alienation as the basic cause of the fractures in social and personal relationships in the modern world and the reform of religion as a way of recapturing community.[13]

Hegel's writings during the Berne period involve a significant shift in his opinions.[14] In the Tübingen writings he has seemed to assume that religion has played the determinant role within society, forming its structure, its patterns of personal and social relationships. In Berne, however, Christianity is seen against a background of the social and political changes of the later Roman era. Far from Christianity appearing to have a determining role in the fashioning of social life and personal

experiences, it is now seen very much as a projection of a malaise that has already set in in society, a malaise with political and economic roots. Hegel argues that the military might of Rome had led to the formation of a governing elite who used military power and the riches derived from conquests to maintain themselves in power. This form of economic and political domination led, in Hegel's view, to disastrous social and political consequences. The individual began to feel estranged from the state: 'The picture of the State as the product of his own energies disappeared from the citizen's soul. . . . All activity and every purpose now had a bearing on something individual – activity was no longer for the sake of the whole or the ideal.'[15] These socio-economic and political changes had a very profound effect upon religious life. Folk religion could not adapt to this changed situation; it was based upon and mirrored a system of reciprocity and integration. With this breakdown of social integration, folk religion had to disappear.[16] Christianity, with its emphasis upon the privacy of the individual in his personal relationship to a God who transcended the social order, fitted the gap. Christianity arose out of the unhappy consciousness left by the decline of a sense of participation and community in Rome. When men could no longer find fulfilment in the social life of the community they either projected their ideals on to a purely private world, or a world beyond the political order, namely, the kingdom of heaven. By this period, the Christian religion was for Hegel not so much a cause of human estrangement as a projection or symptom of it. The separation of public and private was not produced by Christianity, making men strangers to human feeling, but rather Christianity encapsulated in a series of images the deep discords present in the Roman world, caused by changes in the economic and social structure of the society.

This move towards a more materialist-based approach to social exploration becomes more pronounced after Hegel's move to Frankfurt, when we begin to see Hegel, under the influence of Sir James Steuart, beginning to reflect more systematically upon the material and economic basis of cultural forms, social values and social structures. I will argue that Hegel derived three major insights from his reading of Sir James Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*:[17] first, the beginnings of a philosophy of history which enabled him to take up a far more positive attitude towards the development of modern society; second, the idea that the development of the exchange economy caused an increase in human freedom and self-development, but which at the same time yields its own forms of integration; and finally, from Steuart's theory of the statesman, he derived a very distinctive theory about the role of the state *vis-à-vis* modern commercial society. Hegel emphatically did not turn his back on his Tübingen ideals of an integrated man in an integrated society; rather, as the result of his researches into political economy, he gradually worked his way towards seeing in the economic life of modern society

the development of new forms of integration and community appropriate for the modern world. These influences are perceptible in his Frankfurt essay, *The Spirit of Christianity and its Destiny.*

In his *Inquiry* Steuart had postulated a threefold process of development in history from pastoral/nomadic, through agrarian to modern exchange economics. The change from one to the other he interprets as a result of the necessity to increase the food supply, as a result of the increasing growth of the population caused by the domination of the sexual impulse in human life. Steuart also correlates with these distinct economic formations particular kinds of social structures with different sets of social values.

So long as men remained unaware that the supply of food could be increased by human effort, man depended entirely upon the bounty of nature, consuming and moving on. In such a pre-agrarian society men do not labour, but live in idleness – as such the society, if such it can be called, is a system of natural liberty. If a man lives off the spontaneous fruits of the earth there can be no inducement to come under any restraint or subordination. This sort of social system could not last very long, in Steuart's view, because of the very definite limit which it set to the level of population, and life could only be maintained at subsistence level. The pressure of the population leads to labour in order to augment the food supply by human effort. This marks the transition to an agrarian economy. The effect of agriculture is that each cultivator can produce much more food than he himself requires, and this surplus allows for the population to increase.

However, natural differences in physical strength, ability and intelligence mean that different levels of surplus are achieved by different men, and those who produce most eventually become the masters of those who produce least. An agrarian economy introduces labour, but replaces a system of natural liberty and independence by a system of servitude and slavery.

On the other hand, the exchange economy is an advance upon the agrarian system out of which it develops because it replaces compulsion by inducement. If wants are multiplied above the level of physical necessities, then once the taste for what Steuart calls 'luxuries' is developed a man has an inducement to produce a surplus through his labour with which he can produce luxuries in exchange. The developed commercial system is a system of freedom rather than of compulsion and servitude.

Not only this, but the exchange economy unites men into relations of functional dependence. One set of men, the farmers, concentrate upon producing a surplus of foodstuffs, another set, the free hands, a surplus of luxury goods, i.e. goods which go beyond the line of bare necessities. Each group exchanges with the other. Thus society is divided into two mutually dependent classes, having recognized wants, and the exchange

economy thus produces a system of freedom and a system of mutual independence. Along with the realization of these values goes the development of urbanization and the political state. Members of commercial society are bound together by a cycle of activities and functions, the creation and expenditure of incomes, the production and consumption of commodities; it is a 'tacit general contract from which reciprocal and proportionate services result universally between all who comprise it'.

The development of a modern differentiated society is therefore seen by Steuart as a *rational* development, and one which also develops human freedom and individuality but also one which develops its own forms of solidarity and interrelationship.[18]

This typology of social development is implicit in Hegel's discussion of Jewish history in *The Spirit of Christianity and its Destiny*, and in this essay Hegel clearly shows that he regards the development of modern commercial activity as part of the 'fate' of man in the modern world. In the essay Hegel describes the development of Jewish history from *Hirtenleben* (pastoral society) to *Staat*, the political constitution, and in what follows I want to try briefly to fill in this typology.

Abraham, for Hegel, is the crucial figure in Jewish history. In Hegel's view, Abraham reversed the trend of progressive development in history.[19] Abraham left an urban society, however primitive, in Ur of the Chaldees, and reverted to a nomadic type of existence, trying to free himself from social ties. Throughout his wanderings, in his attempt to reassert the pastoral/nomadic existence, Abraham scorned social ties: 'He struggled against his fate which would have offered him a stationary communal life with others.'[20] The development of patterns of mutual integration including labour – surely part of what is necessarily involved in the notion of a stationary life – is thus clearly regarded by Hegel as part of the fate of modern man. This kind of simple nomadic existence could not maintain itself, as was revealed in the time of Jacob by the famine, when Jacob and his sons were forced to buy corn from Egypt, which had a highly developed agrarian system. At this point Hegel argues: 'The fate against which Abraham and hitherto Jacob also had struggled, that is to say the possession of an abiding dwelling place and attachment to a notion, Jacob finally succumbed to. The spirit which led them out of this slavery, and then organised them into an independent nation works, and is matured from this point onward in more situations than those in which it appeared.'[21] The development of urban life, mutual dependence and a political culture is thus seen by Hegel to be part of man's destiny against which the Jewish patriarchs struggled. Abraham sought independence in Hegel's view, and, as Steuart had shown, independence is a correlate of pastoral societies; but though Abraham may have been independent, he was not *free*, in Hegel's view, just because of the pressure of material needs in such a truncated economy: 'With the

Jews, the State of independence was a state of total passivity and total ugliness. Because their independence secured them only food and drink, an indigent existence, it followed that with this independence, with this little all was lost or jeopardised. There was no life left over which they could have enjoyed. This animal existence was not compatible with the more beautiful form of life which freedom would have given them.'[22] Abraham was independent, but was not free. Freedom, for Hegel, was always a much more complex value than mere independence and self-maintenance. It became linked with self-realization within a rationally comprehensible social order involving intricate forms of mutual interdependence.[23]

The influence of Steuart is very clear here. A nomadic society of this sort is passive because it does not involve labour; it maintains only a bare level of subsistence; there is nothing left over for the development of individuals or for culture. In addition it seems clear that Steuart's typology is being employed in the essay. The development of modern society with its highly differentiated forms is not an unremitting process of degeneration, as hitherto he had been prone to see it, but is rather a rational process and in some sense part of the fate or destiny of the modern world. Steuart had shown, at least in principle, that reflection on modern society could reveal that it realized certain values, such as complexity of culture and individual freedom which could not be realized in less developed forms of life. At the same time the commercial structure of modern society with its system of exchange for mutual advantage throws up new less direct but still present forms of social solidarity. Hegel began to hark back to Greece and the homogeneity of Greek society far less and instead to concentrate on the structure of modern society in an attempt to describe the way in which the social, political and economic practices of modern society themselves embody the conditions within which freedom can be realized and forms of social solidarity appropriate to the changed conditions of the modern world could be achieved. There is a rose to be discerned within the cross of the present; modern society for Hegel comes to embody within itself the seeds of community and mutuality without the sacrifice of personal liberty. There *is* a unity, a harmony, a totality to be discerned beneath the apparent arbitrary surface of bourgeois life. This developing conviction comes out in another rather abstract way in an essay of this period, 'On Love'. In this essay it is clear that Hegel has a far more positive attitude towards differentiation and plurality than he had in his earlier essays, which embodied his strictures on the severe and unreconciled diremptions of modern life:

> the linking of many persons depends upon similarity of need and reveals itself in objects which can be common, in relationships assuming such objects and then in common striving for them and a

> common activity and enterprise. A group of similar aims, the whole range of physical need may be the object of limited enterprise and in such an enterprise a like spirit reveals itself and this common spirit delights to make itself manifest.[24]

This possibility, that forms of harmony and integration could be developed out of what seem to be forms of differentiation, in this case the striving to satisfy personal physical need, was most likely suggested to Hegel by his reading of Steuart, and indeed, as we shall see, in his future discussion of political economy Hegel was very keen to show how apparently egocentric interests, the ownership of property, the labour of the individual in the satisfaction of his own needs, his use of tools, all of which seem to involve a progressive differentiation of one man from another, also generate new, less immediate but still perceptible forms of harmony and social solidarity.

Finally, at this point in the argument, I want to say something briefly about Steuart's conception of the 'Statesman'. By 'Statesman' Steuart means merely the form of government, whatever it happens to be in any particular society, and in his *Inquiry* he argues that all economic activity requires the oversight of a statesman, whether it is a representative government of some sort overseeing the development of the modern commercial society, or the patriarch acting as the leader of a nomadic pastoral society. In a modern commercial society, Steuart suggests, the government is able to mitigate some of the more baneful aspects of the growth of commercial relationships by a policy of control over economic activity:

> It is hardly possible suddenly to introduce into the political economy of the state the smallest innovation be it ever so reasonable, nay ever so profitable without making some inconveniences. A room cannot be swept without making a dust and one cannot walk abroad without dirtying one's shoes neither can a machine which abridges the labour of men be introduced all at once into manufacture without throwing very many people into idleness. In treating every question of political economy I constantly suppose a statesman at the head of the government systematically conducting every part of it so as to prevent the vicissitudes of manners and innovations by their immediate effects from hurting any interest in the commonwealth.[25]

This conception of public intervention and control of the pace of economic development favoured by Steuart was, broadly speaking, foreign to the *laissez-faire* views of Adam Smith and others, and indeed his views were very critically received in Britain. It does seem, though, that Steuart was influenced by the work of the Cameralists in Germany, and particu-

larly by Justi.[26] As we shall see, it is possible to interpret Hegel's Jena writings, as well as a good deal of his subsequent work on political economy, as an attempt to come to a philosophical grasp of the developing relationship between economic activity, the role of the state in the economic sphere, and personal liberty.

Hegel's task, as he saw it in 1800, was rather different from how he had envisaged it ten years previously. No longer was he convinced that the redemption of modern society was to be found in the recapture of something like Greek folk religion; on the contrary, correctly understood, the mechanisms of modern bourgeois society do provide the seeds of their own redemption. Modern commercial society, beneath the surface play of alienation and diremption, does yield institutions, practices, principles and values which generate forms of social solidarity which are no doubt very different from those of the Greek model but which, none the less, are more appropriate for the changed circumstances of the modern world. To detect, describe and comprehend these latent forms of unity within differentiation was a philosophical task. As he says in his essay *The Difference between Fichte and Schilling's System of Philosophy*, 'Bifurcation is the source of the need for philosophy.' In this particular case philosophy will attempt to grasp the forces at work in modern society which can, on reflection, be seen to be working for harmony and integration and produce a transfigured understanding of civil society, the system of needs, the state, and public authority.

III

In this section of the paper I shall try to illustrate how Hegel attempts this philosophical redescription with particular institutions and practices within the economic sphere. The three examples are labour, tools and property. In each of these cases Hegel's strategy is just the same; as seen by many economists and political theorists of his day these three activities and institutions involve an increase in individuality, a growth in the differentiation of one man from another, and an undermining of the intimate bonds of communal life. Hegel endeavours to produce by reflection a dialectical reversal of this conventional picture by showing that while labour, tools and property may well be seen to have a strongly individualistic dimension, they none the less fall within the public domain and are characterized by that integration which in fact they secure within that domain.

The first text in which this philosophical strategy for dealing with issues in the sphere of political economy becomes clear is in the *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, in which Hegel uses for the first time in any extended way a central thesis of his about the character of labour: that individual

labour undertaken to satisfy individual needs in fact takes on an intrinsically social and universal dimension in commercial society:

> The work of each person in regard to its content is universal labour, seeing the needs of all and also apt to satisfy the needs of an individual: otherwise stated, labour has a value. The labour and property of a single individual are not what they are to him, but what they are to all. The satisfaction of needs is a universal dependence of all particular individuals in their relationship to others . . . each person though an individual having needs becomes a universal.[27]

For Hegel labour is not just an individual activity but inherently social. A man produces not merely to satisfy his own needs but also on a reciprocal basis for others. The satisfaction of all my needs above their basic subsistence level is beyond the power of my own labour and depends upon the production of commodities by others. Labour plays a crucial role in the intricate system of mutual interdependence, which he calls the system of needs. At the same time he clearly argues that labour is central to the growth of individuality, self-consciousness and self-discipline. The argument here, which has the effect of stressing the differentiating function of labour, is classically put in the *Phenomenology*:

> Desire has reserved to itself the pure negating of the object and thereby unalloyed feeling of self. This satisfaction however, just for that reason is itself only a state of evanesence for it lacks objectivity and subsistence. Labour on the other hand is desire restrained and checked, evanesence delayed, in other words labour shapes and fashions the thing . . . the consciousness that toils and serves accordingly attains by this means the direct apprehension of that independent being as itself. . . . By the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through labour; for just that form is his pure self-existence which therein becomes truly realised.[28]

Labour is therefore crucial to attaining self-consciousness and at the same time seems to sap the bonds of social solidarity just because of its role in the development of an individual's conception of himself as a free and independent being. Hegel therefore clearly recognizes that the development of labour and productive activity increases individuality and self-consciousness. However, he is not willing to draw unremitting individualistic consequences from his recognition of the differentiating role of labour. On the contrary; the satisfaction of an individual's needs requires the labour of others once his needs extend beyond mere subsistence: 'Need and labour are thus elevated into universality and this creates in

a great nation *an immense system of communality and mutual dependence.*'[29] The close-knit *sinnliche Harmonie*[30] of the Greek polis depended upon the fact that the citizens did not labour. The growth of the commercial economy has destroyed this *sinnliche Harmonie* and replaced it with a unity in difference, a system of functional mutual interdependence, a system of interrelationships which requires a good deal of intellectual effort to grasp and to tease out. In this task, classical political economy has played a decisive role for Hegel because the economist is attempting to find 'reconciliation here, to discover in the sphere of needs this show of rationality lying in the thing and effective there'.[31] In his account of labour, therefore, Hegel attempts to produce a philosophical redescription of the social relationships engendered by labour and to argue that a recognition of the differentiating role of labour in modern society does not require us to take up an individualistic view of society. Of course, for Hegel, this redescription, which yields a communitarian vision of society even within a recognition of the differentiation engendered in commercial relationships, is not just some kind of consoling fantasy in terms of which we come to terms with the world by veiling its real nature. Rather, the philosophical description of labour relationships, both from the individual and the social perspectives, cuts far deeper and reflects more faithfully the *real character* of the phenomena than either individualistic political theory or classical political economy, from which such political theory has developed. These structures of understanding of social life remain at the level of the understanding which trades in bifurcation, abstraction and a reductionist account of reality and social relationships. A conceptual grasp of the world as given in philosophy in Hegel's view reflects the true nature of reality just because reality is itself dialectical. To this extent the underpinning of Hegel's claim that his communitarian redescription of social life is not a consoling dream depends upon his arguments about the congruence between thought and the world developed in the various logics.

In his treatment of other facets of commercial society Hegel utilizes the same kind of principles which we have seen at work in his account of labour. One of these facets, the use of tools, is closely bound up with labour, and one can see again how Hegel uses this feature to draw conclusions about the degree of mutuality which exists, often unrecognized, in the heart of production and exchange systems. The invention of a new tool may seem, on the face of it, to require us to acknowledge the free creative vision of the self-conscious individual who created it, and Hegel certainly does not wish to undervalue individual human achievement in the creation of new tools. However, he insists upon two points which are of great importance in seeing how even an activity such as invention has its non-contingent social dimension. First of all, the tool responds to a felt need within the labouring process, and in addition its

invention requires a background of inherited skill or expertise,[32] but more than this it is a *tool* only in so far as it encapsulates a help or a solution to a productive problem which is open to anyone with the appropriate skill to take up and utilize. The invention of a tool is not, then, a private creative activity but has this double-sided social aspect: 'Faced with the general level of skill the individual sets himself off from the generality and makes himself more skilful than others, invents more efficient tools. But the really universal element in his particular skill is his invention of something universal; and others acquire it from him and thereby annul his particularity and it [the tool] becomes the common immediate possession of all.'[33] Invention therefore requires two sorts of social dimension: (1) a tradition of inherited skill in production against the background of which the tool is invented and (2) its nature as a *tool* as opposed to any other sort of object requires that it satisfies certain public criteria relating to the productive process within which it is to play a part and, because of this, its use is open to all. These points are nicely summed up in the *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*: 'It is that wherein working has its permanence, that alone which remains of the labourer and the substances worked upon in which its contingency is externalized; it is inherited in the traditions while that which desires as well as that which is desired only subsist as individuals and individuals pass away.'[34] Tool making and tool using therefore relate to a public domain of inherited skill and wisdom in productive processes, and the invention of tools has to be made intelligible within the background of this type of social cooperation.

My final example of Hegel's attempt to redescribe and put into a more communitarian perspective the central features of commercial society is property. The ownership of property is very closely bound up in Hegel's view with the development of individuality, self-consciousness and the distinctness of one person from another. It is the way in which the specific and individual character of a person's will is made objective: 'personality is that which struggles to lift itself above this restriction and give itself reality, or in other words to claim the external world as its own'.[35] Conceived in this way property may be regarded as a decisive differentiating institution within society. But again a dialectical reversal in the argument occurs which has the result of crediting property with an equally central social dimension. Possession and appropriation are necessary, but not sufficient conditions of property. Property as a *right* has to be recognized. If property is not recognized then although an object may be appropriated, entitlement to it has not been vindicated. The property has to be recognized as property by those who have been excluded by the act of appropriation. Appropriation may be an individualistic, indeed a possessive individualistic act,[36] but property requires social recognition: 'The security of my possession becomes the security of the possession of all: in my property all have their property';[37] and 'I hold my property

not merely by means of the thing and my subjective will, but also by means of another person's will as well and so hold it in virtue of my participation in a common will.'[38]

Property as embodying a claim to entitlement as opposed to a power of appropriation can exist only within a nexus of mutually recognized rights and obligations. In addition, property relationships lead to more concrete interrelationships in contractual situations. A freeman must be able to alienate his property, otherwise he would be tied to the particularity of nature. A man needs property in which to objectify his will, but he does not need *this* object as opposed to *that*. This capacity to alienate one's property, because it means transferring an entitlement, requires contractual relationships and a legal system. The appropriation of objects, therefore, may be a sheer act of will by the free subject, but the act of appropriation has to be conjoined with social recognition. So at the heart of the property relationship which seems so individualistic is a non-contingent social dimension within which entitlement is recognized.

As we have seen, Hegel does not see the modern commercial system as necessarily yielding a radically individualistic vision of society. Rather, the very activities so characteristic of the commercial system, both in production and exchange, presuppose very intricate patterns of relationship. At the heart of the system of needs, therefore, can be seen seeds of mutuality and social solidarity. Nor is this just a feature of labour, tools, invention and property: it is true equally of other features of the system of needs, the division of labour, the generation of economic value and membership of corporations. In all of these cases Hegel tries to show that below the surface play of rather arbitrary atomism there are generated criss-cross patterns of human interrelationships which may not be discernible in any immediate way. Modern solidarity has to be detected, exposed and described by the philosopher. This is a philosophical task even within the sphere of political economy because although political economists have done important work in producing a sketch of the structure of the modern economy, they have done so in terms of rather one-dimensional and simplistic postulates about human nature, which has led them to undervalue precisely those social corollaries of economic activity which Hegel wishes to bring to the fore in his account. In addition they have failed to connect their accounts of, for example, labour, with any more general theory about human nature and its development which would have enabled them to have put the sphere of the economic into a broader perspective, which would have included, as it does for Hegel, putting it into the moral, political and cultural perspective of the modern world. Hegel seeks throughout both to relate economic activities to an individual anthropological dimension – attempting to place economic activity such as labour and ownership of property into an account of the incremental development of the powers and capacities of the individual

human mind – and equally to link these developments with their social effects, which he regards as being basically integration.

IV

Hegel's account of how the modern system of needs can provide a basis for mutual interdependence and social solidarity is not exhausted by his attempt to demonstrate the integrative forces at work in the activities undertaken within the system of needs. Such patterns of integration do exist: but in Hegel's view they do so in a somewhat haphazard fashion. The intricate patterns of interrelationships secured within the system of needs may be very easily disrupted by changes in the methods of production and the demand for new commodities, and by external factors such as changes in the terms of trade between one nation and another. The interrelationships produced within the system of needs are fragile: 'Whole branches of industry which supported a large class of people suddenly disappear because of a change in fashion or the values of their products fall because of new inventions in other countries.'[39] Hegel's conclusion is that 'the system moves this way and that in a blind and elemental fashion and like a wild animal calls for permanent control and curbing'. As a result of this somewhat fragile set of mutual interactions Hegel argues that there has to be some form of control over economic relationships if the patterns of dependence secured in the system of needs are to be rational, stable and capable of being exhibited by systematic thought. Here again, we may perhaps see the influence of Steuart on Hegel. Although by the time of the Jena period (1801–7) Hegel was aware of the work of other political economists, notably Adam Smith, these ideas about the necessary limitations of the *laissez-faire* economy are less likely to have come from that particular source than they are from Steuart. Steuart's doctrine of the statesman was, as we have seen, expressly formulated in his discussion of the exchange economy as an instrument of control over that economy, with the object of preventing changes in the terms of the economy harming the commonwealth. Rosenkranz, in his discussion of Hegel's relationship with Steuart, argues among other things that Steuart influenced Hegel's thinking on the police role of the state,[40] and the connection between Hegel's preoccupations as we have seen them developing so far and Steuart's argument appears at precisely this point. By *Polizei*[41] is meant the general controlling function of the state over society as a whole, and in his writings of this period Hegel begins to work out a theory of public authority, or the police functions of the state, which would enable the blind system of dependence secured in the system of needs to be made more rational and secure. It is crucial to his aim to show that the modern world can secure some

sense of community, that he should be able to demonstrate that the modern state in fact has the structure and the will to intervene in the economic life of society if tensions within that sphere could lead to the breaking down of the forms of social solidarity engendered within it. In fact, it was Hegel's view that the modern state did exhibit this feature; both in France under Napoleon, and after 1807 in Prussia, the state did take a hand in overseeing the development of the economy on progressive lines, but in such a way as to secure the basis of social solidarity within the economic sphere.[42]

However, Hegel's actual theory of the role of public authority and its relationship to the system of needs is rather different from that of Steuart. The latter's theory of the statesman did not entail any particular view about the character of the control to be exercised by the government; indeed his use of the wholly general term 'statesman' would seem to indicate this. Hegel, however, wished to argue that only state intervention in the economy by a public authority of a special kind could be legitimate in the context of the modern commercial economy. Hegel was as concerned as Steuart about the general equilibrium of the exchange economy, but his interest in the sort of control involved went beyond that of Steuart. We are told by Rosenkranz that Hegel fought against what was dead in Steuart's system and that he sought to save 'the inner life of man within the commercial system'.[43] It is in his account of public authority that we can best see the actual preoccupations of Hegel on these issues.

It seems that there are two aspects of Hegel's desire to save the inner life of man within the commercial system, and both of these aspects require for their treatment a move on Hegel's part beyond the theories on *dirigism* put forward by Steuart. The first is concerned with the way in which a sense of individuality and subjective freedom are incompatible with some *dirigist* programmes; the second is concerned with the enervation of the individual within the productive processes of modern manufacturing industry and the ways in which the state can provide ways of overcoming this enervation. These two perspectives on the role of the individual and his inner life within modern society will now be discussed in turn.

In considering the police functions of the state in securing the equilibrium of the system of needs, Hegel seems to have retained in his mind the possible sense of estrangement which can exist between the individual and the state which he explored in his essay on 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion': 'The picture of the state as the product of his own energies disappeared from the citizen's soul. The care and oversight of the whole rested upon one man or a few.'[44] Such an emphasis upon the possibly estranged character of the modern state was lacking in Steuart. Hegel, however, rejected any idea of intervention which smacked of rigidity and dictatorship. This point comes out very clearly in his criticism

of Prussia in 1800–1 in *The German Constitution*: 'In recent theories, carried partly into effect, the fundamental presupposition is that a state is a machine with a single spring which imparts movement to the rest of the wheel in its infinite complexity and all the institutions of society should proceed from the supreme public authority and should be regulated, commanded and overseen by it.'[45] Mere control will not suffice for Hegel. The equilibrium of the system of needs is important, but the equilibrium should not be secured by the state at the risk of stifling the individual and his pursuit of subjective freedom within the market by the rigidity of its control. Hegel takes up this point again in *The German Constitution*: 'This is not the place to argue at length that the centre, as the public authority, i.e. as the government must leave to its citizens whatever is not necessary for its appointed task. Nothing should be so sacrosanct to the government as facilitating and protecting the free activity of citizens in matters other than this . . . for the freedom of the individual is inherently sacrosanct.'[46] The point being made here is not only a moral one; it has a metaphysical side which ties it into the previous discussion of the system of needs. Modern commercial society, based upon free labour, has seen the gradual emancipation of the individual, giving him through his labour a sense of his own worth and a sense of himself as a centre of subjective freedom. So the system of needs is a centre of subjective freedom and particularity. Consequently, any form of state control over an economic system which realizes such values must be compatible with the existence of such values. Hegel is thus attempting to steer a middle course between non-intervention in the system of needs, which would be disastrous, because all that would then exist would be blind and irrational forms of mutual interdependence; on the other hand, too much control by a remote government might secure equilibrium but at the cost of producing further estrangement between the citizen and the political order. The problem of this *via media* is well put in the *Philosophy of Right*: 'Two views predominate at the present time. One asserts that the superintendence of everything properly belongs to the public authority; the other that the public authority has nothing to regulate here because everyone will direct his efforts towards the needs of others.'[47] The second point will not stand because of the way in which the system of needs is the sphere of particularity and no regulation would mean a system out of equilibrium; the first position outlined here is incompatible with the individual's sense of subjective freedom, which is realized in the system of needs over which control is to be exercised. Only a society without a sense of subjective freedom could justifiably use this form of social control, and Hegel gives as an example the building of the pyramids in Egypt.[48] In this kind of society, in which the consciousness of subjective freedom has yet to dawn and take hold, such centralized control of the labour and economic activity of individuals is justified. However, in the

modern world we are emphatically not in that position; the public authority must control the minimum necessary for the maintenance of equilibrium within the system of needs and, furthermore, as the external state, i.e. imposed upon the particularity of subjective interests in the economic sphere, it has to be under some kind of representative political control, otherwise it will appear as the state did to the Roman, an estranged institution. The kind of control which Hegel sees as being legitimately within the sphere of the public authority is the fixing of the prices for the basic necessities of life, the arbitration of disputes between producers and consumers of commodities, the dissemination of information relating to the terms of trade, and the general economic situation within which industry operates. The operation of the public authority in these sorts of spheres will enable the system of needs to operate more effectively and calculably than it otherwise would have done. At the same time, although an advocate of *dirigism*, as we have seen, Hegel is very clear that the subjective freedom of man, part of his inner life, should be considered very carefully when deciding what to oversee in the system of needs.

The second way in which Hegel goes beyond Steuart in his concern with the individual personality within the commercial system is his consideration of the enervation of human capacities and powers which goes on within the productive processes of modern society. Hegel retained a very great deal of respect for the Greek ideal of the wholeness and integrity of the personality, and he was concerned with man's fate in terms of this value in the modern world, and most especially within the system of needs. Already, as we have seen, in the argument over the role of the public authority Hegel was concerned that this intervention would not diminish subjective freedom more than necessary, but at the same time he was well aware that this subjective freedom, which reached its zenith in the modern world, has its own costs, and in Hegel's mind these costs, broadly speaking, were twofold. In the first place the pursuit of subjective freedom within the system of needs may result in civic ties being lessened, even though, as we have seen, the system will yield its own forms of *economic* interdependence; second, labouring within manufacturing industry may well lead to an enervation of the human personality. In these two ways again the inner life of man was threatened by the commercial system. In the first case he would be made over to entirely subjective interests, whereas Hegel was always clear that human beings were responsive to other values as well, to do with group or state enterprises; in the second case the division of labour was making labour too mechanical and abstract. Again both of these factors were absent from Steuart, although they were present in the writings of Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, whom Hegel had read by the early 1800s. The first of these problems, the dissolution of civic ties caused by the self-centred nature of bourgeois life, was a well-known problem, discussed by Herder,

Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin within Hegel's own cultural context; the second problem, the enervation of man within bourgeois society, was posed particularly strongly by Schiller in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in which he argues: 'Eternally tied to a single fragment of the whole, man develops into nothing but a fragment. Everlastingly in his ear is the monotonous sound of the wheel he operates. He never develops the harmony of his being and instead of stamping the imprint of humanity upon nature, he becomes no more than the imprint of his occupation and his specialised knowledge.'[49] This insight of Schiller into the enervating character of the modern labouring process was probably backed up by Hegel's reading of Adam Smith. In *Jenenser Realphilosophie I* he quotes the example of the pin factory cited by Smith in his *Enquiry into the Wealth of Nations* in the context of some general reflections upon the character of labour within manufacturing industry.[50] In *Jenenser Realphilosophie II* he is very explicit about this: 'A mass of the population is condemned to the stupefying, unhealthy and insecure labour of the factories, manufactures, mines and so on . . . this necessity turns into the utmost dismemberment of the will, inner rebellion and hatred.'[51] The problems posed by commercial society are not just those confined to social cohesion but also concern the inner life of men, the social and personal cost of the emancipation of the individual, which clearly occurs, in Hegel's view, within the modern world, and reached its zenith of individuality within the system of needs. Again a political economy which is going to be philosophically adequate has to be able to come to terms with these kinds of costs incurred in economic activity. While at the same time allowing for subjective freedom, we must understand the modern state as supplying institutions which go some way at least towards mitigating the worst of these costs.

In Hegel's view there are solutions to these problems both within the system of needs itself and outside it. Within the system of needs he is concerned to show that in this context belonging to a social class and to a corporation are important group ties in which individuals lost in particularity can come to a sense of group affiliation and thus some of the enervating aspects of their subjectivism can be overcome.[52] These group ties of class and, to speak more modernly, occupational community are also valuable in that they are not institutions or relationships imposed on persons from outside the economic sphere but arise out of the subjective pursuits in the economic sphere. As a member of a class and of a corporation I am able to become aware of claims upon me which restrict my self-seeking and impose upon me some natural-seeming group constraints. These constraints are not of a universal character; they are rather sectional, or, as Hegel would say, specific, but none the less, the claims which I represent to myself as a member of a partial community or class are an incremental advance on my unfettered subjectivism. This kind

of partial community membership will not give a person a universal consciousness, a perspective on his society and the values realized in it as a *whole*, and this is true of any group affiliations within the system of needs. But this does not imply, as, for example, Rousseau thought, that such intermediate groups stood in the way of the specific individual attaining this universal, this sense of identification with society as a whole. On the contrary, in Hegel's view, such institutions act as important intermediaries between the individual with his personal desires, interests and freedom and the universal interests of society as a whole. Without these intermediary institutions within commercial life the individual would be unable to attain the universal; he would, as Hegel sometimes puts it, 'be lost in particularity'. Therefore, the partial communities of class and group affiliation act as educative institutions within commercial life and lift men gradually and without apparent constraint above the purely private pursuit of personal utilities. As such these partial communities overcome some of the enervation of the person caught up in the continual striving for personal utility so characteristic of bourgeois life and at the same time again reveal that within commercial society there are autonomously engendered forms of community and ways of mediating community identity between individuals.

At the same time these communities are only partial, and the perspective on life which they offer is one of sectional interest rooted within the system of needs. There is still no sense of personal identification with an overall normative order which expresses universality and impartiality – features which Hegel regards as necessary features of any rounded, total human life. This universal dimension to life is provided by the state proper and the general cultural life of the community, its art, religion and philosophy. Only within the state and the culture of the national community can the universal be realized. Within the strictly political sphere the particular individual is related to the state via the specificity of his social and class position to the Assembly of Estates. Although the modern world has realized most of all, and in many divergent directions, the values of freedom and moral autonomy, Hegel thought that the French Revolution and the subsequent Terror had demonstrated the impossibility of direct democracy in the modern world; but at the same time tyranny and despotism, however enlightened, are incompatible with the values realized in the modern world generally, and which also have this central place, as we have seen, in the system of needs. A representative political system, which represents not so much individuals lost in privacy, as they are when taken on their own, but individuals related to one another in estates or classes – the basic partial communities of the system of needs. Through this form of representation the individual, however particularized his activity may be within the system of needs, does have this relationship with the specific partial communities and via

them to the universal embodied in the interests of society as a whole. At the same time, as this rather oblique political involvement overcomes this fragmentation of his being, so the involvement also prevents the state appearing as an alienated form, as it did to the Roman. Hegel sums up his thoughts about representation via estates in a way which brings out this point particularly well:

> the Estates stand between the government in general on the one hand and the nation broken up into particulars on the other. Their function requires them to possess a political and an administrative sense and temper, no less than a sense of the interests of individuals and particular groups. At the same time the significance of their position is that in common with the organised executive, they are the middle term preventing both the extreme isolation of the crown, which might otherwise seem a mere arbitrary tyranny and also the isolation of the particular interests of persons, societies and Corporations.[53]

Through the partial communities of the system of needs and the representation of the most basic of these, the class-based community, through the Assembly of Estates in the political sphere, the enervation of the individual so characteristic of the system of needs is diminished and, in addition, civic ties are forged between individuals and the groups which within the system of needs reflect their interests. Hegel seems confident that this is how the political arrangements of the modern European state will seem to the individual citizen:

> The result is that the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the cooperation of particular knowing and willing; and the individuals do not live as private persons for their ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal in the light of the universal and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end. The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme self-subsistent particularity [in the system of needs], and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself.[54]

So we can see that Hegel's early ideals – the restoration of some sense of the wholeness of man and the human personality, a restoration of some sense of community and a redefinition of man's relationship to nature – are seen by Hegel to be realized in the structure of the modern political community, once that structure is understood. This structure is not on the surface, and thus unlike the Greek the modern man does not

have a sensuous experience of being at home in the world. The modern man can only be *bei sich selbst* when he has grasped the forces making for integration and communal identity in the modern world. It is Hegel's thesis that these forces are there to be found, and their positing is not just a consoling fantasy projected on the world by the deracinated intellectual with something of an admiration, however ambiguous, for the communication structure of Greek society, the individual's sense of personal wholeness, and his sense of integration into nature, into Mother Earth. While the Greeks' achievement of this was to be achieved by the senses and celebrated through art, that of the modern man has to be procured by prodigious effort, by 'taking on the exertion of the concept'.[55] In the final section of the paper I shall argue that not only is it absolutely necessary, given his philosophical aims, that Hegel should have propounded his vision of the communitarian tendencies within the political economy of modern society, but this vision applied in this field is in fact the Achilles' heel of Hegel's work, and is capable of undercutting the whole of his attempt to show that the modern state can provide man with a home in the world. I shall also argue that this can be shown without importing external considerations drawn, say, from Marxist critiques of his account of bourgeois society, or from analytical critiques of his whole philosophical enterprise, but rather from his own admission that he is unable to see how the modern state, predicated upon the kind of production and exchange system which he outlines in his various accounts of the system of needs, can cope with the problem of poverty, with all that poverty entails for Hegel.

V

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel argues that poverty is an endemic and ineradicable feature of modern society. It is not a feature of a particular industrial society when it is in a state of decline or disintegration but rather when it is running smoothly, when, as he says, 'civil society is in a state of unimpeded activity'.[56] Poverty, by which Hegel means both physical deprivation and an internal sense of alienation from society on the part of those who are poor, is thus, for Hegel, an apparently structural phenomenon, generated by the smooth running of modern society. The mechanics of the process are a bit obscure, but the main outline of the argument seems to be clear enough.

When industry produces goods, as it does incessantly under the pressure of men's wants, it may well find that there are not enough consumers for its products, as Hegel says: 'the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and the lack of a proportionate number of consumers who are themselves producers'.[57] In such circumstances the bottom will drop

out of the market for a particular commodity and men who, by the continuing refinement of the division of labour within the system of needs, are entirely dependent on industry producing this or that particular product, for which there is not a market in these circumstances, will be thrown into idleness. These sorts of consequences, he seems to think, follow from the general organization of manufacture in civil society, and the poverty resulting from this has two distinct sides – the actual level of physical deprivation involved and the consequent changes in the social attitudes of those who are deprived. In Hegel's view the level of poverty or deprivation is not fixed by some definite or objective standard based upon a notion of absolute or basic need but rather by some notion of the lack of satisfaction of relative need, need relative to what is necessary to be a functioning and integrated member of a particular society with a particular standard of living and a particular pattern of consumption: 'When the standard of living of a large mass of the people falls below a certain subsistence level – a level regulated automatically as the one necessary for a member of the society . . . the result is the creation of a rabble of paupers.'[58] In a comment on this paragraph Hegel gives a pithy and practical application of his point of view: 'In England, even the poorest believe that they have rights; this is different from what satisfies the poor in other countries.'[59]

Poverty is then, for Hegel, a state of relative deprivation: deprivation relative to the normal or average standard of living in a particular society, and in this view he is surprisingly modern in his outlook. It is also precisely at this point that poverty as both a relative concept and a state makes contact with Hegel's other view that there are social attitudes which are characteristic of poverty: a sense of rootlessness and alienation, a set of social attitudes which, he considers, leads to the formation of a rabble existing, so to speak, on the edges of society. Because of their deprivation and poverty men become deprived of various advantages of society – acquiring skill, education, access to justice and even to organized religion, all of which are mediating institutions which link men to the social system, and bereft of this link they become estranged: 'Poverty in itself does not make men into a rabble; a rabble is created only when there is joined to poverty a disposition of mind, an inner indignation against the rich, against society, against the government, etc.'[60] The unimpeded activity of civil society therefore establishes norms relating to need and consumption. These norms are not absolute but are related to the particular pattern of economic activity in the society, but at the same time such a society is not able to satisfy the consumption needs of large groups of people in that society in terms of its own criteria of need. Consequently a group of people are pressed down to this internally posited poverty floor, and within such groups there is generated a profound sense of alienation and social hostility. Modern society then renders

groups of people deracinated and compels them to live both materially and spiritually on the very periphery of society. What then becomes of Hegel's claim that he can provide an account of the modern world which will enable man to be *zu Hause*, to be integrated into the modern political community and find it expressive of his own deepest desires? It is absolutely necessary for the coherence of Hegel's vision that he should be able to provide an answer to this probing question. The institutions of the modern state should be able to provide a way of overcoming this structural tendency of modern society to produce groups of social outcasts. If he could show that such institutions are present or are at least intimated within the general structure of the modern European state, then the coherence of his theory would be vindicated; without it there is a gaping hole in his view that, correctly understood, the modern state can provide man with a home and a sense of belonging in the modern world.

However, it is clear that Hegel cannot do this, and he admits as much in his discussion in the *Philosophy of Right*, although he does not sufficiently attend to the consequences of his admission for the coherence of his own overall theory of modern society. In paragraph 245 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel discusses several possible solutions to the problem of poverty as he sees it. The first solution is that of organized charity, utilizing money raised from taxes levied on the wealthier classes or money raised from private foundations of various sorts, monasteries, hospitals etc. But the problem created by charity is that while the physical poverty of the deprived may be alleviated, it will do nothing to change those social attitudes which, as he has argued, go along with poverty. Poverty undermines self-respect, self-subsistence and self-maintenance, but so does charity. Charity will not cure the problem because, as he had argued, these same social attitudes engendered by poverty are equally sustained by charitable activity: 'the needy would receive subsistence directly, not by means of their work, and this would violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect in its individual members'.[61]

Another possibility open to the modern state might be to create work by stimulating the economy. However, in Hegel's view, this would in the long run only make matters worse, because the problem of poverty has been caused by overproduction in the first place and so cannot be cured by further economic growth. Hegel, writing in 1821, did not entertain the possibility of creating work by providing for public works which do not issue in consumer goods. Bereft of the Keynesian way out Hegel was left to conclude: 'It hence becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble.'[62] Modern society within its own boundaries generates poverty,

and the alienation which Hegel sees goes with it, and is by his own admission unable to overcome this central structural feature.

The only solution which Hegel can envisage is that of colonization – not for the sake of raw materials but more to seek new markets for its overproduced goods and for transporting part of its population – just those who are driven to deprivation by the unimpeded activity of civil society. For Hegel, as for Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin and Bukharin, there is an internal connection between capitalist society and imperialism. Imperialism, for Hegel, is the only solution to the problems of poverty, and as those problems are interminable, so is imperialism. However, the important point to notice, so far as the argument of this paper is concerned, is that the modern state cannot *within itself* provide the answer to one of its own self-generated problems and, consequently, the modern state, however philosophically comprehended, cannot provide a home in the world for certain of its members. Hegel has delved deeply into this aspect of modern society and has in his own terms provided a conceptual grasp of it; but for the poor man faced with having to move to the colonies, to understand the inner dialectic driving civil society to push beyond its own limits is poor recompense. This seems to be a clear case where Hegel's famous assertion, made within the *Philosophy of Right*, 'Ich ist in der Welt zu Hause wenn es sie kennt, noch mehr wenn es sie begriffen hat', sounds very hollow. At the heart of this claim there lies a deep contradiction and one which strikes at the heart of the Hegelian theory of reconciliation. As a recent commentator has argued, 'Does not Hegel's manifest inability to find a solution to the problem of poverty indicate his failure as a social philosopher in the terms of his own philosophy which has as its purpose the systematic inclusion of the totality which would mean the overcoming of all contradiction and alienation?'[63] Perhaps in certain moments Hegel was aware of this. Certainly he was concerned with the problem of poverty from a very early period, and it was a concern which with all the problems it poses for his own system stayed with him for the rest of his life. In Rosenkranz, we find Hegel reported as being concerned sufficiently with the problem prior to 1800 to have made excerpts from English newspapers which reported Poor Law debates in Parliament: 'Hegel followed with great excitement the Parliamentary debates on the poor law and the alms by which the nobility and the aristocracy of wealth attempted to appease the rage of indigent masses.'[64] Rosenkranz also argues that it was in the no longer extant commentary on Steuart's *Inquiry* that Hegel concentrated his ideas on poverty, and there are discussions of the problem in *System der Sittlichkeit*, in *Realphilosophie I* and *II*, and in the *Philosophy of Right*. It was thus a problem which goes all the way through Hegel's writings and which in his very last works on the subject he came no nearer to solving. Hegel was always concerned with the inner life of man and the quality of human

relations, yet here, in the heart of his theory of society, which represents virtually the culmination of his attempts to produce this transfigured grasp of the modern world in the interests of just these values, there is this deep discrepancy between what is required by the character of the theory and the actual structure of society.[65]

Notes

1 'La Doctrine économique de Hegel et la conception hégélienne du travail', in *Hegel Studien*, Beiheft 4 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1965). 'Les Origines de la pensée économique de Hegel', in *Hegel Studien*, Band 3 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1965).

2 Paris: Librairie Dalloz, 1963; Librairie Dalloz, 1965.

3 London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973 and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973.

4 H. Nohl (ed.) *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907), p. 27.

5 F. G. Nauen, *Revolution, Idealism and Human Freedom* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1971).

6 J. Taminiaux, *La Nostalgie de la Grèce dans l'Idealisme allemand* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968).

7 Even in 1805 in *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, II, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1969) he is still able to write as follows about the Greek city state: 'In der alten Zeit war das Schöne öffentliche Leben die Sitte aller, Schönheit (als) unmittelbare Einheit des Allgemeinen und Einzelnen, ein Kunstwerk, worin kein Teil sich absondert vom Ganzen, sondern diese genialische Einheit des sich wissenden Selbsts und seiner Darstellung' (p. 251).

8 Nohl, op. cit., p. 9.

9 ibid., p. 16.

10 Vide Schiller's poem, 'Die Götter Griechenlands', written in 1787–8 in Schiller, *National Ausgabe*, ed. Blumenthal and von Weise (Weimar: Bohlau, 1943), Vol. 1, pp. 190ff.

11 Nohl, op. cit., p. 28.

12 Chamley, 'Les Origines de la pensée économique de Hegel', pp. 226–7 and particularly: 'En depit de leur artifice, les besoins ne present pas comme une contrainte: il ne cessent pas de faire partie de la nature humaine.'

13 ibid., p. 227.

14 Particularly in 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion', in Nohl, op. cit., pp. 139ff.

15 ibid., p. 251.

16 This sociological account of the decline of folk religion is given in Nohl, op. cit., pp. 220–1.

17 London, 1767. Reprinted in an edition edited by A. Skinner (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966). Hegel read and made a commentary on this book between 19 February and 16 May 1799; vide Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben* (Berlin: Wiss. Buchges., 1969), p. 86. Unfortunately this commentary is no longer extant. Manfred Riedel is one of the few commentators to have discussed Steuart's influence on Hegel in his *Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969), pp. 75ff. G. Lukács, in *The Young Hegel*, trans. R. Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975), argues that it is useless to estimate the influence

of Steuart's particular economic principles on Hegel (p. 71). I have no general defence to offer to this charge other than suggesting to the reader that he pay careful attention to the points made in the body of the paper.

18 As Chamley rightly says: 'L'Inquiry est avant tout une theorie de l'évolution', in *Economie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel*, (Paris, Dalloz, 1963), p. 59.

19 This comes out particularly clearly in the unpublished text by Nohl, which begins *Zu Abrahams Zeiten. . . .* Vide H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development 1770–1801* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 285.

20 Nohl, op. cit., p. 246.

21 ibid., p. 245.

22 ibid., p. 253. Cf. H. Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (London: New Left Books, 1972), p. 162.

23 Leszek Kolakowski helped me a good deal to clear my mind on this point. On all of this see *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952), para. 194.

24 Nohl, op. cit., pp. 322–3.

25 *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, ed. A. Skinner, op. cit., p. 122.

26 The *Inquiry* was written in Tübingen, where, as a Jacobite, Steuart lived in exile after the abortive 1845 rebellion.

27 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, ed. Lasson (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1932), p. 328.

28 *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. Baillie, 2nd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), pp. 238–9.

29 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, pp. 239–40; cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 377.

30 I borrow this term from Schiller.

31 *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 189.

32 Compare the account given of invention by a latter-day idealist, Michael Oakeshott, in *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen, 1962).

33 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, p. 197.

34 ibid., I, p. 221.

35 *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 39.

36 Vide C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962).

37 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, p. 240.

38 *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 71.

39 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, pp. 232–3.

40 Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1844), p. 86.

41 Vide *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 231 and Brian Chapman, *Police State* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970).

42 Vide W. H. Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

43 Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. 86.

44 Nohl, op. cit., p. 223.

45 *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. Lasson (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1923), p. 28. Cf. *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Stuttgart: Frommann Verlag, 1936). This view of the state was certainly held by Justi, one of Steuart's mentors, in almost identical language; vide Justi, *Gesammelte Politische und Finanzschriften* (Leipzig, 1761), Vol. 3, pp. 86–7. There is some discussion of Cameralism in M. Oakeshott, *Human Conduct* (Oxford: The

Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 300, and in G. B. Parry, 'Enlightened Government and its Critics', in *The Historical Journal*, 6, No. 2 (1963).

46 Lasson, ed., *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 28–9.

47 *The Philosophy of Right*, addition to para. 236; cf. para. 124.

48 ibid., para. 236.

49 Schiller, *National Ausgabe*, op. cit., Vol. 20, p. 322. Hegel thought that these letters were a masterpiece; vide the letter from Hegel to Schelling, 16 April 1795, in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Vol. I, ed. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1952).

50 *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, p. 238.

51 ibid., II, p. 232.

52 This has a good deal in common with modern theories of occupational communities. For further discussion of these themes vide my paper, 'Community: Concept, Conception and Ideology', published in *Politics and Society*, Fall 1977.

53 *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 302.

54 ibid., para. 260. The additions to this paragraph are also well worth reading on this point.

55 G. A. Kelly, 'Notes on Hegel's Lordship and Bondage', *The Review of Metaphysics*, June 1966 [reprinted in Volume III, pp. 162–79. R.S.].

56 *The Philosophy of Right*, para. 243.

57 ibid., para. 245.

58 ibid., para. 244.

59 ibid., para. 244 addition.

60 ibid.

61 ibid., para. 245. This problem very much exercised the British Hegelians such as Bosanquet and Green. They argued that charity could be part of the answer to poverty if charitable donations could be given to those who, on investigation, could be shown to be in a position to use it effectively to improve their position. To be effective and to avoid Hegel's difficulty charity must be organized and given only to the deserving poor. Bosanquet was active in the Charity Organization Society, which had just this aim.

62 ibid., para. 245.

63 R. L. Perkins, 'Remarks on the Papers of Avineri and Pöggeler', in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. J. J. O'Malley (Nijhoff, 1970), p. 220.

64 Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. 85.

65 This paper has been read in the Universities of Glasgow, Hull, Manchester and Oxford. I am particularly grateful for the comments of the following: in Glasgow, Professor G. B. Parry and Dr A. Skinner; in Manchester, Professor I. Steedman and Dr H. Steiner; in Oxford, Professor L. Kolakowski and Dr Z. Pelczynski, and in Hull Dr R. Berki.

Political community and individual freedom in Hegel's philosophy of state

Z. A. Pelczynski

To the best of my knowledge Hegel never once uses the expression 'political community'. He is, in fact, very sparing with the term 'community' (*Gemeinwesen*) itself. It occurs, for example, in paragraph 150 of the *Philosophy of Right*: 'In an *ethical* community, it is easy to say what man must do, what are the duties he has to fulfil in order to be virtuous; he has simply to follow the well-known and explicit rules of his own situation.' Although the *idea* of community is crucial to his political thought, he is very casual and eclectic about the terms in which to express it. In different contexts he calls it 'substance', 'organism', 'organic whole', 'totality' and 'the universal', *das Allgemeine*.

When Hegel has in mind specifically political community he calls it *der Staat* (the state). His definition of the state is therefore highly stipulative, and quite removed from the conventional meaning of this term. 'The state' for Hegel means any ethical community which is politically organized and sovereign, subject to a supreme public authority and independent from other such communities. Ancient oriental empires, Greek city-states, the Roman republic and the modern nation-states are all 'states' in his sense. A few paragraphs after the reference to 'ethical community' in the *Philosophy of Right*, there is a good example of his usage: 'When a father inquired about the best method of educating his son in ethical conduct, a Pythagorean replied: "Make him a citizen of a state with good laws" ' (§153). Here, as in innumerable places, Hegel refers to the polis, which was an ethical and political community, simply as 'the state'.

Hegel seems to have been extremely unselfconscious about his esoteric use of the term 'state', so different from the one common in his time and even more today. Only in one place in the *Philosophy of Right* (§267) does he feel the need to distinguish the all-embracing sense of the state as a sovereign ethical community from what he there refers to as 'the strictly political state and its constitution'. 'The strictly political state' is

a system of public organs, powers or authorities through which an independent nation, a sovereign community, governs itself.[1] I can think of only one place in the whole corpus of Hegel's writings where the distinction between the esoteric and the common sense of 'the state' is clearly made, and where he offers something that might be taken as a mild apology for his peculiar usage of the term. The place is *Reason in History*, a name sometimes given to the *Introduction* to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.[2] I would like to quote Hegel's remarks in full.

> The spiritual individual, the nation – in so far as it is internally differentiated so as to form an organic whole – is what we call the state. This term is ambiguous, however, for the state and the laws of the state, as distinct from religion, science, and art, usually have purely political associations. But in this context, the word 'state' is used in a more comprehensive sense, just as we use the word 'realm' to describe spiritual phenomena. A nation should therefore be regarded as a spiritual individual, and it is not primarily its external side that will be emphasised here, but rather what we have previously called the spirit of the nation . . . in short, those spiritual powers which live within the nation and rule over it.
>
> (*LPhWH*, 96)

This is Hegel's clearest admission that the state and its laws 'usually have purely political associations', but that he chooses nevertheless to define it much more widely, to include not just the ethical life of a nation (as he does in the *Philosophy of Right*) but all 'those spiritual powers which live within the nation and rule over it'. Hegel goes on to list these 'spiritual powers' a few pages further on in *Reason in History*:

> A nation's religion, its laws, its ethical life, the state of its knowledge, its other particular aptitudes and the industry by which it satisfies its needs, its entire destiny, and the relations with its neighbours in war and peace – all these are extremely closely connected.
>
> (*LPhWH*, 101–2)

These two remarks in *Reason in History* are worth quoting in full also for another reason. They draw our attention to an important but to my knowledge never before noticed ambiguity in Hegel's idea of community. In the *Philosophy of Right* it is the narrower concept of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), derived from Plato and Aristotle, and Greek experience generally, which underlies his theory of political community. An independent nation is a political community when its members share certain ethical ideals and are united by a generally accepted system of social morality prescribing their duties, roles or functions in society. In other

writings it is the wider concept of national spirit (*Volksgeist*) which is the foundation of community life. Derived from Montesquieu, as Hegel generously acknowledges in many places,[3] it is not only a wider but a more modern idea. It corresponds in most respects to our contemporary concept of culture. The state from this viewpoint is a political community because it is a cultural community, because its constitution is grounded in a national culture, because its political institutions are deeply interwoven and interdependent with all the other aspects of culture, and similarly express the genius, character or 'principle' of national culture.[4] While Montesquieu is justly credited with the discovery of the idea of political culture, and Tocqueville with its brilliant use in *Democracy in America*, it seems to me that Hegel too deserves some recognition for the development and application of Montesquieu's insight.[5]

Hegel's primary source of inspiration and model of political community, however, is to be found in Plato and not Montesquieu. Hegel respected Aristotle as a metaphysician and in several ways was deeply influenced by him, but he thought poorly of his practical philosophy. In Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (the Haldane–Simson translation in three volumes published 1892–6)[6] Hegel gives Plato's *Republic* twenty-six pages of print, compared with the less than four that he gives to Aristotle's *Politics*. He regarded Aristotle's main political work as a common-sense but pedantic and largely empirical treatise, while the *Republic* seemed to him a work of true genius and a most profound theory expressing the essence of Greek society and culture (*PhR*, Preface). The fundamental presupposition of the *Republic* and ancient Greek political life generally (Hegel argues) was the absolute priority of the community over the individual. Hegel refers to it usually as the 'substantiality' of the polis or 'the substantial character of ethical life' in Greece. The ancient Greek thought of himself as a political animal by nature. He saw himself as a son of his city, a member of an ongoing and historical community and not as an independent individual, facing other similar individuals in an atomistic state of nature or some rather loosely structured society which they had voluntarily established. A Greek citizen was so wholly immersed in the politics and ethos of his city that he cared little for himself. He guided his actions not by his self-interest or some private conception of happiness and virtue, but by the traditional ideals of his city, which he accepted without questioning.[7] One could say that he had no individuality in the full sense of the word; he was merely an instrument, a member of an organism, which acted through him in pursuit of its own universal ends.

> We are accustomed to take our start from the fiction of a condition of nature, which is truly no condition of mind, of rational will, but of animals among themselves: wherefore Hobbes has justly remarked that

> the true state of nature is a war of every man against his neighbour . . . The fiction of a state of nature starts from the individuality of the person, his free will, and his relation to other persons according to this free will. What has been called natural law is law in and for the individual, and the condition of society and the state has been looked upon as the means of the individual person, who is the fundamental end. Plato, in direct contrast with this lays as his foundation the substantial, the universal, and he does this in such a way that the individual as such has this very universal as his end, and the subject has his will, activity, life and enjoyment in the state, so that it becomes his second nature, his habits and his customs. This ethical substance which constitutes the spirit, life and being of individuality, and which is its foundation, systematizes itself into a living, organic whole, and at the same time it differentiates itself into its members, whose activity brings the whole into existence.
>
> (*LHPh*, II, 92–3)

The basis of Plato's *Republic* was the ideal of justice, defined as keeping one's proper place in the city or fulfilling the traditional duties of one's station in life; it was the honouring of the established social morality of the city, its ethical life or *Sittlichkeit*. This, in general, was the true Greek ethical ideal, but in the *Republic* according to Hegel it was given an unusually oppressive interpretation. Plato was conscious of elements of self-interest and critical reflection, which he feared had undermined the existence of the polis, and he sought to counter them through restrictions on marriage, property, the choice of career and other rights, and the despotic power of the guardians. The fact that he was prepared to go to such length, Hegel argues, revealed a fundamental defect of Greek ethical life – its indifference to 'subjectivity' or 'subjective freedom'. It needed centuries of cultural and social development, above all the rise of Christianity, for the ideal of subjective freedom to become recognized and accepted, at least in the Western world.

The thinker in Hegel's opinion who expressed the ideal most clearly in the context of modern secular life and society was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's political thought is therefore the antithesis of Plato's, so to say the opposite pole of the community–individuality relationship. On Hegel's rather extreme interpretation Rousseau asserts the absolute primacy of the individual over the community. The individual, his conscience and his will, however arbitrary, are the foundation of society and the state. Traditions, customs, established institutions and laws have no validity whatever unless men have accepted them voluntarily. The essence of human liberty consists precisely in this voluntary acceptance. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel sets up the antithesis of Plato and Rousseau with great clarity.

> The lack of subjectivity is really the defect of the Greek ethical idea . . . Plato has not recognized knowledge, wishes, and resolutions of the individual, nor his self-reliance, and has not succeeded in combining them with his idea; but justice demands its rights for this just as much as it requires the higher elucidation of the same, and its harmony with the universal. The opposite to Plato's principle is the principle of the conscious free will of individuals which in later times was more especially by Rousseau raised to prominence: the necessity of the arbitrary choice of the individual, as individual, the outward expression of the individual.
>
> (*LHPh*, II, 114, 115)

Later in the *Lectures*, in a short section which does little justice to Hegel's considered estimate of Rousseau's significance in the history of political philosophy, Hegel quotes the famous words of *Du contrat social* with complete approval (if somewhat incorrectly): 'liberty is the distinguishing feature of man. To renounce one's liberty is to renounce one's manhood' (*LHPh*, III, 401). And a page later he writes:

> The principle of freedom emerged in Rousseau, and gave man, who apprehends himself as infinite, this infinite strength. This provides the transition to the Kantian philosophy, which theoretically considered made the principle its foundation.
>
> (*LHPh*, III, 402)

Rousseau rejected the validity of all established morality, religion, customs and institutions. Nothing external to the individual could claim any authority. His personal conscience was the supreme judge of morality. Only that to which the individual gave his free consent was binding on his will. The will of each individual, unrestricted and unguided by anything except his own deeply felt conception of virtue or the common good, was the foundation of law and political association. There was nothing to ensure that the General Will *de facto* differed from the will of all or the will of the majority. Rousseau confused the truth that there could be no freedom without the consent of one's mind and will with the very different proposition that such consent constituted freedom. Without an external, objective, rational principle to guide our will it becomes arbitrary and amoral. By systematically rejecting all established order as the source of such principles Rousseau ended with no ethical leg to stand on. The logical consequence of Rousseau's approach when followed in practice was the dissolution of all society, community and state. In a long passage in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel attributes the excesses of the French Revolution to Rousseau's ideas on will, consent and freedom,

and to 'the reduction of the union of individuals in the state to a contract and therefore to something based on their arbitrary will':

> when these abstract conclusions came into power, they afforded for the first time in human history the prodigious spectacle of the overthrow of the constitution of a great actual state and its complete reconstruction *ab initio* on the basis of pure thought alone, after the destruction of all existing and given material. The will of its refounders was to give it what they alleged was a purely rational basis, but it was only abstractions that were being used; the Idea [the true concept of community] was lacking; and the experiment ended in the maximum of frightfulness and terror.
>
> (*PhR*, §258)

The same idea of course Hegel had expressed thirteen years earlier in the brilliant chapter on 'Absolute freedom and terror' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).

Hegel's own political philosophy may be seen as his reply to Rousseau's conception of individual freedom or (to put it another way) as an attempt to do justice both to Plato's and to Rousseau's insights into the human condition. *The Philosophy of Right* is the most fully developed and the most theoretical statement of Hegel's own position and offers us what he believes is a theory of political community adequate to the modern world. Despite its schematic form and extremely difficult and obscure terminology there is unfortunately no better single place in which to explore Hegel's ideas on political community.

Hegel tries to come to terms with the truth of Rousseau's – and Kant's – moral position – the concept of an autonomous subject whose essential freedom consists in not being forced to accept anything as valid unless his conscience, will and reason have given consent to it – in three major but distinct ways. The first concerns the construction of his theory of political community as we find it in the *Philosophy of Right*. There, in the long Introduction, Hegel starts with the concept of the individual will (as Rousseau required that one should) and not with the Platonic 'substantial' ethical, legal and political order. He believes, and indeed argues, that such normative order (*Recht*, 'law' or 'right', as he generally calls it) must be proved to be in some deep philosophical sense the creation of the individual will, the outcome of its immanent development towards full freedom, if it is to have legitimacy in the modern world. In this philosophical endeavour he may have learned something from Hobbes – beside Rousseau the only modern political philosopher Hegel takes seriously[8] – who in his 'rational generation of the commonwealth' in *The Leviathan* also starts from the abstract individual and deduces the

necessity and authority of the state from the will of the multitude of such individuals.

The second major way in which Hegel seeks to meet the challenge of Rousseau is by developing, within the framework of his theory of political community, a theory of 'civil society' as its distinct but necessary aspect ('moment' in the Hegelian jargon). In the city-states of ancient Greece and in republican Rome, Hegel believes, citizens enjoyed freedom only in so far as they participated in the political life of their community and through their actions – in peace or war – sustained its existence and furthered its welfare. The unhampered pursuit of private, selfish interests, although it made an appearance at the end of the Hellenic era and was institutionalized in civil law in the era of the Roman Empire, was not conceived as freedom by the ancients. It is a peculiarly modern idea of freedom – civil or *bourgeois* rather than political or citizen freedom – and it creates a new form of interdependence among men. Instead of men aiming consciously at the common good, they now aim at their own good, the acquisition of property or the furtherance of individuality. But, without realizing it, they indirectly satisfy the needs or promote the interests of other men and establish new kinds of social bonds.

> The Greeks were still unacquainted with the abstract right of our modern states, that isolates the individual, allows of his acting as such, and yet, as an invisible spirit, holds all its parts together. This is done in such a way, however, that in no one is there properly speaking either the consciousness of, or the activity for the whole; but because the individual is really held to be a person, and all his concern is the protection of his individuality, he works for the whole without knowing how. It is a divided activity in which each has only his part, just as in a factory no one makes a whole but only a part, and does not possess skill in other departments, because only a few are employed in fitting the different parts together. It is free [i.e. republican] nations alone that have the consciousness of and activity for the whole; in modern times the individual is only free for himself as such, and enjoys citizen freedom alone – in the sense of that of a *bourgeois* and not a *citoyen*. We do not possess two separate words to mark this distinction. The freedom of citizens in this signification is the dispensing with universality, the principle of isolation; but it is a necessary moment unknown to ancient states.
>
> (*LHPh*, II, 209)

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel uses the term 'civil society' to describe this particular dimension of the modern state as a political community – the 'civil' sphere in which individuals seek to satisfy each other's needs through work, production and exchange; in which there is a thorough-

going division of labour and a system of social classes; and in which law courts, corporate bodies and public regulatory and welfare authorities ('the police') promote security of property, livelihood and other rights. This system of interdependence, says Hegel, 'may be *prima facie* regarded as the external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it' (*PhR*, §183), but only *prima facie*.

The state in the *proper* sense of the word – as a sovereign political unit, which is also an ethical and cultural community – implies more than 'a system of needs', civil rights and social welfare. It implies an institutional public forum in which matters concerning the community as a whole are debated and decided upon, and the decisions carried out by the government. In this public or political arena the needs of civil society and of the national community are appraised and evaluated, and the unity of private interests and community values is realized in a conscious and organized manner.

> The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But concrete freedom consists in this, that personal individuality and its particular interests not only achieve their complete development and gain explicit recognition for their right (as they do in the sphere of the family and civil society) but, for one thing, they also pass over of their own accord into the interest of the universal, and, for another thing, they know and will the universal; they even recognize it as their own substantive mind; they take it as their end and aim and are active in its pursuit. The result is that the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the co-operation of particular knowing and willing; and individuals likewise do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal in the light of the universal, and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end. The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself.
>
> (*PhR*, §260)

We are not concerned with the details of Hegel's conception of 'the political state and its constitution', the political organization of the modern national community. After the breath-taking conceptualization of the modern state in §260, Hegel's description of its political organization comes rather as an anti-climax. The supreme public authority consists of hereditary monarchy, an executive of ministers and higher civil servants responsible to the king, a representative body based on estates

and corporations, and a system of public opinion or (as he puts it) 'public communication' (§319). Through this political mechanism and the mechanism of civil society the 'abstract' freedom of the individual, conceived by Rousseau in complete isolation from all ethical, social and political context, is made 'concrete'. The individual finds a scope both for his personal interests and subjective choices and for the disinterested service to the ethical ideals and public interests of the community. He is (as Hegel is fond of expressing it) a *bourgeois* by virtue of belonging to the civil realm but a *citoyen* because of his membership of the political realm.

The third major way in which Hegel responds to Rousseau's challenge is by developing in the *Philosophy of Right* a theory of freedom, which is more adequate that Rousseau's own ideas. I use the term 'theory' deliberately, because it is not just a single alternative concept of freedom, say 'positive' freedom, which Hegel offers us instead, but a whole series of separate but related concepts linked together in a systematic way.

At the heart of Rousseau's political philosophy lies the well-known conundrum which Hegel, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, quotes in full in German and the original French.

> The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.[9]

Hegel denies that Rousseau has succeeded in solving the conundrum. Man cannot 'remain as free as before' after entering the political community. He must either restrict his freedom or transform its nature. Starting from a will that is only potentially free, he must develop it to its full capacity – to make it actually free, in the community. He will then not be 'as free as before', but *more* free; he will have achieved a higher, more adequate and more satisfying type of freedom – true, real or actual freedom. Many of Rousseau's interpreters have seen him as moving in the same general direction as Hegel. As a result of the social contract man no longer 'obeys himself alone' but the 'general will', which is both his own higher will, and the will of the community of like-minded citizens, and is articulated and expressed through the mechanism of direct popular legislation in a republican state. But if this is Rousseau's solution, Hegel rejects it as unsatisfactory; he denies that Rousseau can logically arrive at a conception of a general will which genuinely transcends particular wills.

> The merit of Rousseau's contribution to the research for a rational basis of the state is that by adducing the will as the principle of the

> state, he is adducing a principle which has thought both for its form and content, a principle indeed which is thinking itself . . . Unfortunately, however, as Fichte did later, he takes the will only in an indeterminate form as the individual will, and he regards the universal will not as the absolutely rational element in the will but only as a 'general' will which proceeds out of the individual will as out of conscious will.
>
> (*PhR*, §258)

In other words Rousseau's general will remains an artificial construct, the will of all or majority will, instead of becoming the living ethos of a political community which Hegel argues is 'the absolutely rational element in the will'.

In his solution of the problem of liberty in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel enlists the help of his speculative philosophical method. He treats freedom as a concept which develops dialectically, as a result of contradictions inherent in its own nature and so unfolds new features at different stages of development until the process is completed and 'the idea of freedom' – the full actualization of the concept – is reached in the structure of the rational modern state. The movement is from an 'abstract' concept of freedom, linked to a single individual will, to a 'concrete freedom' actualized in a political community as a rational system of wills. In this essay I shall not follow Hegel's footsteps faithfully, i.e. dialectically. Apart from the enormous difficulty and obscurity of the dialectic method I believe that it does not really work in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel does not succeed in proving the *necessity* of transition from one stage to another, and his attempt to do so produces many tortured and implausible arguments. I shall nevertheless follow Hegel's stages of development, restating and simplifying them somewhat, and hoping in this way to throw sufficient light on his solution of the individuality–community problem.

Hegel's conception of freedom might perhaps be called 'contextual', though this is a term which to my knowledge has not been applied to his or any other idea of freedom. I mean by this that Hegel conceives freedom always in a social context, or more accurately in the context of human interaction. The structure of such interaction constitutes the context of freedom in which it becomes something concrete and definite, an actuality rather than a mere idea. In pursuing Hegel's line of inquiry it is possible to distinguish four major kinds of freedom and four corresponding contexts or models of human interaction. These are: natural, ethical, civil and political, and I propose to look at them in this order.

NATURAL FREEDOM

The foundation of the Hegelian theory of freedom rests on his concept of the will. Will is not a separate faculty, distinct from reason; thought and will are simply two aspects or modes of reason: 'the will is . . . a special way of thinking, thinking translating itself into existence, thinking as the urge to give itself existence' (*PhR*, §4 A). In choosing, deciding and acting a man thinks, reflects and uses concepts; he manifests or expresses his rationality, which is his essential characteristic. The way a man views himself, the image he has of himself or, more adequately, the conception he has of himself as a human being determines what kind of will he has and therefore what kind of interaction with other men is possible for him. Freedom is therefore bound up with self-consciousness and true freedom presupposes true self-consciousness.

> The self-consciousness which purifies its object, content, and aim, and raises them to the universality effects this as thinking getting its own way in the will. Here is the point at which it becomes clear that it is only as thinking intelligence that the will is genuinely a will and free. The slave does not know his essence, his infinity, his freedom; he does not know himself as human in essence; and he lacks this knowledge of himself because he does not think himself. This self-consciousness which apprehends itself through thinking as essentially human, and thereby frees itself from the contingent and the false, is the principle of right, morality, and all ethical life.
>
> (*PhR*, §21R)

The will itself, at its most basic, is a complex idea; in the simplest act of willing Hegel distinguishes three elements or 'moments'. According to Hegel's theory of 'subjective spirit' will is foreshadowed in impulse and sentiment, which largely determine our conduct in childhood. At the level of development at which will and thought can be clearly distinguished from desire and feeling an act of will contains according to Hegel: (1) 'the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content' (*PhR*, §5). This is the element of withdrawal from, or rejection of, all external determinators, an assertion of the will's independence *vis-à-vis* the external world.

> When the will's self-determination consists in this alone, or when representative thinking regards this side by itself as freedom and clings to it, then we have negative freedom or freedom as the Understanding conceives it.
>
> (*PhR*, §5)

(2) The second moment, 'the particularization of the ego', consists in the ego giving itself 'differentation, determination and positing a determinacy as a content and object' (§6). This content may be something natural – a need or desire – or something rational – some thought or principle of action. The determination or focusing of the ego on something definite or particular, the self-identification of the ego with it, constitutes the second, 'positive' element involved in willing, the second partial but essential aspect of the will.

(3) 'The will is the unity of both these moments. . . . It is the self-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e. as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e. in its self-identity and universality' (i.e. as a source of all determinations). 'This is the freedom of the will and it constitutes the concept or substantiality of the will, its weight so to speak, just as weight constitutes the substantiality of a body' (§7). Differently put, an act of will implies an agent capable of rejecting all courses of action except the one that he really chooses to follow.

When a man is so self-determined but the only content of his will – the only source of his determinations – are his impulses, appetites and desires, he has what Hegel calls an 'immediate or natural' will (§11). Such a will does not act according to its rational nature, although it is capable of utilitarian rationality; Hegel admits that impulses can be compared and evaluated in the light of experience and selected on grounds of satisfaction or happiness (§20). The indeterminacy of the will in the absence of a truly rational criterion of choice constitutes 'arbitrariness' (*Willkür*). Such indeterminate, arbitrary will has sometimes been considered a paradigm of free will, but this is a serious mistake in Hegel's view.

> The choice which I have is grounded in the universality of the will, in the fact that I can make this or that mine. This thing that is mine is particular in content and therefore not adequate to me and so is separate from me; it is only potentially mine, while I am the potentiality of linking myself to it. Choice, therefore, is grounded in the indeterminacy of the ego and the determinancy of a content. Thus the will, on account of this content, is not free, although it has an infinite aspect in virtue of its form. No single content is adequate to it and in no single content is it really at grips with itself. Arbitrariness implies that the content is made mine not by the nature of my will but by chance. Thus I am dependent on this content, and this is the contradiction lying in arbitrariness. The man in the street thinks he is free if it is open to him to act as he pleases, but his very arbitrariness implies that he is not free. When I will what is rational, then I am acting not as a particular individual but in accordance with the concept of ethics

> in general. In an ethical action, what I vindicate is not myself but the thing.
>
> (*PhR*, §15A)

In other words, true freedom is ethical freedom and can only be reached in an ethical community. Because the arbitrary wills of men do not coincide when they act capriciously, an orderly, structured society of natural men is impossible. It can only be conceived as an abstraction, 'a state of nature', in which impulse and violence reign unchecked, a Hobbesian state of 'war of all against all' in which life is 'nasty, brutish and short' and from which man should seek to escape by all means. Hegel regards 'natural freedom' as the freedom peculiar to such a state of nature; it is the only freedom which independent, egocentric and impulse-driven individuals can possibly have when they find themselves in a shared physical space. However, arbitrary choice has a place in a rational normative order, as Hegel admits in his account of civil society; in fact it is one of its fundamental constituents.

ETHICAL FREEDOM

In order to have a minimum kind of stable interaction possible it is necessary that all men should recognize certain rules or principles of action, and follow them in practice. The minimum amount of rules that a rational agent will recognize and accept as rational will obviously be those which safeguard his life, limb and possessions, and which guarantee to him an area of activity free from the invasion and interference of others. Within this area each man can do what he pleases and can exercise his natural, immediate or arbitrary will to the fullest extent compatible with an equal opportunity of everybody else in society to do the same. The system of such rational rules, based on reciprocity and a necessary minimum of restriction, Hegel calls 'abstract right'. It is really the natural law of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was based on the revival of Roman law; in his discussions of the Roman Empire Hegel makes it clear that the idea of law as defining and protecting private rights of individuals was discovered precisely in that epoch of world history.[10]

Hegel's analysis of abstract right and its component elements of personality (capacity for rights), property, contract and wrongdoing in the *Philosophy of Right* add much to our understanding of his conception of freedom. Hegel bases the system of personal rights on man's appropriation of natural objects and the recognition of possessions as rightful property by other men. By appropriating things man rises above nature and asserts his independence as a free agent: 'a person is a unit of

freedom aware of its sheer independence' (*PhR*, §35A). However, the principles of abstract right are 'actualized' in the positive legal system of civil society and thus become a part of the broader normative order of *Sittlichkeit*. They need not be discussed separately.[11]

The same applies to the sphere of morality which in Hegel's view forms another element of ethical life. By morality Hegel means conduct determined by one's conscience, noble intentions or subjective judgement of what is absolutely good. Abstract right (and the positive law based upon it) is indifferent to motives and merely requires external conformity to objective rules of conduct. The

> question about the self-determination and motive of the will . . . now enters . . . in connection with morality. Since man wishes to be judged in accordance with his own self-determined choices, he is free in this relation to himself whatever the external situation may impose upon him . . . Man's worth is estimated by reference to his inward action and hence the standpoint of morality is that of freedom aware of itself. (*PhR*, §106A)

As we have already seen this is the conception of freedom Hegel ascribes to Rousseau and Kant and criticizes as inadequate – false in theory and disastrous in practice. However, as an element of *Sittlichkeit* it has an essential place in modern social and political life. It is a necessary corrective to all normative structures based on positive law, conventional morality and traditional institutions.

Sittlichkeit is the real context in which men achieve freedom or self-determination. It is a structure of human interaction based on established laws and institutions which have survived the test of experience but also theoretical scrutiny. It is the actual, social mechanism through which men are shaped into ethical agents – creatures *in practice* acting according to laws, recognizing and fulfilling obligations, sometimes sharing aims and purposes with other men, and pursuing them through their joint endeavours. When Hegel speaks of ethical life as a 'substance' and men as its 'accidents' he wishes to draw our attention to the thoroughgoing way in which ethical life moulds man's nature or 'socializes' individuals.[12] *Sittlichkeit* comprises the existing normative world, the historical world of human relations and ideals, and is so to speak the soil in which abstract right and morality grow. Without it the other two are meaningful only as hypothetical conditions or abstract models of human interaction.

> The right and the moral cannot exist independently; they must have the ethical as their support and foundation, for the right lacks the moment of subjectivity, while morality in turn possesses that moment

> alone, and consequently both the right and the moral lack actuality by themselves.
>
> (*PhR*, §141A)

In concrete historical terms the right and the moral are simply 'moments' or aspects of *Sittlichkeit*, which develop within the matrix of man's traditional social life in the course of world history, in the modern era, and enrich the primitive, simple, undifferentiated customary ethics with new and important elements: self-interest and conscience or, in Hegelian terminology, 'particularity' and 'subjectivity'. In terms of European culture *Sittlichkeit* is the ethical existence of the modern European man when he has become aware of his individuality, asserted its rights in theory and practice, and at the same time has accepted the necessity of an objectively existing ethical order in which his individuality is realized.

Looked at from another angle ethical life is the sum total of the determinants of the will – the ethical norms, rules or principles of actions which provide the substance of human decisions in so far as they are the acts of concrete thinking, choosing and willing agents. The key normative idea of *Sittlichkeit* is *duty (Pflicht)*.

In *Sittlichkeit* the agent is faced with clusters of duties arising out of his concrete social position, for example as husband or father, employer or employee, teacher or student, member of an estate, profession or corporation, a voter, a parliamentary representative or a civil servant. These duties are not abstract or general as Kantian categorical imperatives are; they are contextual, particularized, tied to our special social roles, dependent on the sphere of activity in which we are engaged. The more complex, articulated and developed a structure society or community forms, the wider is the range of roles available to its individual members, but also the more elaborate the system of duties which ethically bind them. In other words duties are the content of laws, institutions, organizations and communities which together make up the structure of an ethical community. And in so far as they have been internalized as habits and dispositions, they are the content of volitions (cp. *PhR*, §150R).

Hegel defines the freedom peculiar to *Sittlichkeit* ('ethical freedom') in terms of duty. This is paradoxical only if we accept the Hobbesian view that duties bind us and restrict our freedom of movement. But for Hegel there is no paradox.

> The bond of duty can appear as a restriction only on indeterminate subjectivity or abstract freedom, and on the impulses either of the natural will or of the moral will which determines its indeterminate good arbitrarily. The truth is, however, that in duty the individual finds his liberation; first, liberation from dependence on mere natural impulse and from the depression which as a particular subject he

> cannot escape in his moral reflections on what ought to be and what might be; secondly, liberation from the indeterminate subjectivity which, never reaching reality or the objective determinacy of action, remains self-enclosed and devoid of actuality. In duty the individual acquires his substantive freedom.
>
> (*PhR*, §149)

In the Addition to this paragraph he concludes:

> Thus duty is not a restriction on freedom, but only on freedom in the abstract, i.e. on unfreedom. Duty is the attainment of our essence, the winning of *positive* freedom.

This conception of freedom as the conscientious acceptance and fulfilment of one's ethical obligations (in Bradley's famous phrase 'my station and its duties') may at first sight appear somewhat unattractive. Even if Hegel's perfect freedom was not simply the obedience to the Prussian state that it has sometimes been alleged to be, this kind of 'substantial' or 'positive' freedom appears compatible with all sorts of situations in which there is very little liberty as it is generally understood by liberals or democrats. A traditional patriarchal society, a feudal monarchy or a modern collectivist, highly regulated state would all seem happily to fit Hegel's conception of an ethical order. But to think that would be to ignore the peculiar modern dimensions of *Sittlichkeit* represented by abstract right and morality, which have just been mentioned. To count as true *Sittlichkeit* the ethical order in our own epoch must be shot through with personal rights and spheres of autonomy, and be acceptable to individual conscience. It must (in other words) incorporate the principles of particularity and subjectivity (cp. *PhR*, §260 quoted above).

Hegel develops this point at great length in the *Philosophy of Right* in the sections of ethical life dealing with civil society and the state, but a word must be said about his concept of family which is, in fact, the basic form of ethical life. The family (i.e. the modern family) also has a subjective dimension – for example in the free choice of partners in marriage or the decision to beget children. It may also satisfy particular needs and desires of individuals for companionship, affection, emotional security and sexual gratification; to some extent it still has an economic function. Yet the dominant elements even in the modern family are 'universality' and 'objectivity'. It is a community which, despite love and affection, often faces its members as something burdensome, something which essentially restricts their arbitrary will. It requires of everybody frequent acts of self-sacrifice and the submersion of particularity in a common life. It is also, for the children at least, a necessity they cannot easily escape. The family is the only community in the modern world

where *Sittlichkeit* in its primordial sense operates in a more or less pure form through precept, habit, unconscious imitation and other devices; these shape the individual's natural will and teach him the elements of ethical life – the recognition and acceptance of multifarious duties and moral discipline over desires and appetites, a discipline which is external to start with, but gradually becomes internalized as self-discipline.

In one sense *Sittlichkeit* pervades all aspects of social life, all relations, institutions, organizations and communities; it is, so to speak, their ethical substratum. But in the modern world it takes on the shape of two distinct ethical *systems* – complex and interdependent ('organic') social wholes – the civil and the political order. In the latter, as in the family, the universal and the substantial elements predominate.

CIVIL FREEDOM

By contrast with the family and the political community the elements of particularly and subjectivity (self-interest and personal choice) come to the fore in, and are the dominant characteristics of, civil society. In civil society men interact with the minimum of ethical or legal constraints. In §206 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel observes that in modern society, in the choice of a career or trade (and therefore class or estate membership), 'the essential and final and determining factors are subjective opinions and the individual arbitrary will, which win in this sphere their right, their merit and their dignity'. In Plato's *Republic* and in the ancient world generally (as Hegel points out in *PhR*, §206R) one's social status was largely determined by the accident of birth or by the fiat of a despotic authority; free choice of one's role in society was not rcognized or secured by appropriate law and institutions as it is in the modern civil society.

> when subjective particularity is upheld by the objective order in conformity with it and is at the same time allowed its rights, then it becomes the animating principle of the entire civil society, of the development alike of mental activity, merit and dignity. The recognition and the right that what is brought about by reason of necessity in civil society and the state shall at the same time be effected by the mediation of the arbitrary will is the more precise definition of what is primarily meant by freedom in common parlance.
>
> (*PhR*, §206R)

'Freedom in common parlance', or what one might call 'civil freedom' in the context of civil society, implies for Hegel the presence of various civil and economic rights, the right of association, the right to a trial by jury, the right to promote group interests through corporations, and the right

to public assistance and protection against misfortune or the vagaries of the market. Many of them represent the enactment and institutionalization of the sphere of abstract right – the realm of legal prohibitions which make it possible for men to act without getting into each other's way. In §230 he seems to anticipate the rise of the so-called social or welfare state rights because he argues that 'the right actually present in the particular requires . . . that the securing of every single person's livelihood and welfare be treated and actualized as a right, i.e. that particular welfare as such be treated'. 'The police' in his special sense of the word and the corporation are concerned with the security of such social rights.

If we consider the question of duties, we can see that civil society with its complex and increasingly articulated structure provides individuals with a host of new social roles and ethical duties. They are not left to custom or convention alone. They are formulated in clear and unambiguous laws. Positive law, when rationally reformed, ensures that our actual social obligations do not contradict the principles of abstract right and morality, for example do not involve slavery, serfdom, arbitrary restrictions on property, compulsory religious attendance or membership of a religious sect. As a self-conscious ethical agent the modern man accepts his obligations gladly and performs them willingly. But he does nevertheless make a sacrifice of a part of his individuality in so doing. Modern community, so to speak, compensates the individual for this sacrifice by furthering his self-interest, by protecting his private rights and welfare, by caring for him as an individual. And this care is extended to him equally and universally as a man, irrespective of religion or nationality, as his basic human right (cf. *PhR*, §209R).

POLITICAL FREEDOM

The culminating point of the development of individual will towards freedom in the *Philosophy of Right* is the political realm, the sphere of the supreme public authority of 'the strictly political state'. It would seem to follow that 'political freedom' – the ethical freedom corresponding to this sphere of interaction – is the highest form of human freedom. We find, however, that 'political freedom' is an elusive concept in the *Philosophy of Right*, and Hegel has rather more to say about it in his minor political works, especially those which he wrote before he took up residence in Berlin. The most likely explanation is that the completion of the *Philosophy of Right* coincided with the onset of reaction in Prussia, after a period of considerable liberalism, and it is more than likely that prudence (or political expediency) tempered Hegel's theoretical zeal in this area of his political philosophy. In fact the clearest acknowledgement

of the importance of public freedom occurs in the *Philosophy of Right* not in the section on the constitution of the state, but in the context of Hegel's discussion of the corporation, which is an institution of civil society. The primary work of the corporation is to achieve security and other sectional benefits for its members, to promote group interests; but it incidentally fosters various ethical characteristics in its members – a sense of honesty, group pride, a sense of belonging and the consciousness of a common end for which they are united. 'As family was the first, so the Corporation is the second ethical root of the state, the one planted in civil society' (*PhR*, §225).

> Under modern political conditions, the citizens have only a restricted share in the public business of the state, yet it is essential to provide men – ethical entities – with work of a public character over and above their private business. This work of a public character, which the modern state does not always provide, is found in the Corporation. . . . It is in the Corporation that unconscious compulsion first changes into a known and ethical mode of life.
>
> (*PhR*, §225A)

In the strictly political section of the *Philosophy of Right* we get only a vague idea what political freedom means and why it is the culminating moment in the development of the will to complete self-determination. Although Hegel purports to offer a dialectical argument, it is clear that for pragmatic reasons he does not think that the opportunity to exercise political freedom need be as wide as the scope to enjoy civil freedom, and makes political freedom a universal right of all citizens only in a very attenuated form. Effectively political participation is a privilege of an elite.

There are a number of reasons why Hegel nevertheless thinks the state to be vitally important for freedom and why it is in the state, a *politically* organized and governed community, that human freedom reaches it fullest embodiment. Let us imagine that we are members of a Hegelian civil society which appears to be fully rational and developed, in that it genuinely respects and promotes our particular interests and subjective choices through an appropriate system of laws and institutions. We fully enjoy what Hegel calls 'freedom in the common parlance', or civil freedom. Are we then *completely* self-conscious and self-determined, or is there still some extra element or dimension of freedom which is lacking? Hegel would probably answer this question along the following lines.

(1) Civil society, although autonomous, is ultimately subject to the political state and its governmental authority ('state power'). Rights may be abrogated, as they are in times of war or civil disturbance; property

may be taxed for public purposes; corporate rights may be curtailed or independent social activities taken over by public bodies.

> In contrast with the spheres of private rights and private welfare (the family and civil society), the state is from one point of view an external necessity and their higher authority; its nature is such that their laws and interests are subordinate to it and dependent on it.
>
> (*PhR*, §261)

When the need for the state's intervention arises there is no machinery within civil society to explain and justify the need, and without it the intervention has the appearance of an arbitrary, high-handed activity. The certainty that sacrifices for the sake of the common good or some other higher ethical principles are justified requires an exchange of views, an expression of opinions, an institutional channel for the debate of public issues. Although Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right* goes out of his way to stress the capricious and often trivial character of public opinion, and wishes to curb its 'excesses', he regards it as a necessary element of political life and the chief manifestation of 'subjective freedom' in the public realm.

> The formal subjective freedom of individuals consists in their having and expressing their own private judgments, opinions and recommendations on affairs of state. This freedom is collectively manifested as what is called 'public opinion'.
>
> (*PhR*, §316)

The operation of public opinion presupposes the freedom of the press, publication and association, all of which can exist in civil society and indeed constitute essential civic freedoms. Hegel, however, argues – quite correctly – that such public opinion is either impotent or dangerous as long as it is not related to governmental authority. It is the function of a representative body to remedy this defect. This body, which Hegel calls 'the Assembly of Estates', forms part of the governmental authority or 'state power', and is a specifically political, not civil, institution.

> The Estates have the function of bringing public affairs into existence not only implicitly, but also actually, i.e., of bringing into existence the moment of subjective formal freedom, the public consciousness as an empirical universal, of which the thoughts and opinions of the Many are particulars.
>
> (*PhR*, §300)

> in them [the Estates] the subjective moment in universal freedom –

> the private judgement and private will of the sphere called 'civil society' in this book – comes into existence integrally related to the state.
>
> (*PhR*, §301R)

It is well known that in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel is extremely vague about the power of the Estates' Assembly, and in all his political writings he insists that rational suffrage is not universal, direct and individual, but limited, indirect and based on communities or organized interests. It should reflect the social articulation of the national and ethical community. Nevertheless, even in the *Philosophy of Right*, he treats the principle of representation as a rational feature of the modern state.[13]

(2) Hegel makes the further point that the representative assembly, like the rest of the supreme public authority, is concerned with laws and policies which are necessarily general and must be discussed in universal, rational terms.

> The state, therefore knows what it wills and knows it in its universality, i.e. as something thought. Hence it works and acts by reference to consciously adopted ends, known principles, and laws which are not merely implicit but are actually present to consciousness.
>
> (*PhR*, §315A)

In the final analysis such ends and principles are part of the general culture of a particular country and express its 'national spirit'. Public opinion and representative institutions are the means through which the principles are related to the practical concerns of the community, where fundamental issues of public life are raised and thrashed out in debate. This makes deputies and the country at large conscious of the principles underlying the actual ethical order, reveals possible inadequacies and contradictions, and generates demands for reform. As for J. S. Mill, so for Hegel, representative government is an essential agency of national education (see *PhR*, §315A). Political institutions promote the kind of national and political self-consciousness which men do not acquire by being mere members of civil society, and they contribute to freedom because they clarify the principles on which the ethical, social and political life of their community is based.

(3) Another reason for Hegel's dissatisfaction with civil freedom as an adequate form of ethical freedom stems from the form of human interaction peculiar to civil society. Although 'burghers' come to depend closely on each other and form a relatively integrated society, their social interdependence is brought about to some extent by the external forces of needs, labour, the division of labour and the market, and not merely through inner individual commitment or personal choice. Also, while performing their duties to each other and cooperating closely, men remain

primarily their own private ends – they (or as Hegel would say, their wills) do not consciously pursue their 'substantial' end, which is the existence of an ethical community making complete freedom possible. They promote the interest of such community only implicitly, indirectly, unconsciously. To this extent they remain within the realm of necessity more akin to nature than to the spiritual realm of freedom. The unity of particularity and universality in civil society is achieved without the knowledge and will of its members and so

> is not the identity which the ethical order requires, because at this level, that of division, both principles are self-subsistent. It follows that this unity is present here not as freedom but as necessity, since it is by compulsion that the particular rises to the form of universality and seeks and gains its stability in that form.
>
> (*PhR*, §186)

By contrast in the political community or the state

> the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the co-operation of particular knowing and willing and individuals likewise do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal in the light of the universal, and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end.
>
> (*PhR*, §260)

Man as potentially free, self-determined agent, once he has become conscious of his nature, cannot allow himself to be determined by social forces operating on him externally, like natural forces, all the more so as those forces are in the last resort the product of his thought and will and so are potentially under his control. His proper end – the membership of a rational ethical community – must be his own conscious aim, otherwise he is not fully free. By participating in political activities, the public affairs of his state, the individual makes a direct contribution to the life and development of the community and thereby increases his self-determination. As we have seen, a start towards this kind of freedom is made already in civil society through the corporation, which changes the 'unconscious compulsion' of working for others in the market economy into 'a known and thoughtful ethical mode of life' (*PhR*, 255A). The modern state creates further opportunities for participation to its citizens, although it allocates different shares according to education, property and status.[14]

(4) Hegel's final line of argument that political freedom is distinct from civil freedom, and represents the highest stage in the development of

freedom, is his version of Rousseau's idea of the General Will. Rousseau insisted that the General Will had to express or manifest itself in the actions of individual citizens performing public functions, especially voting on laws. The General Will is the rational or moral will of citizens acting for the common good (the general interest of the body politic) rather than for their own personal good or private interest. For Hegel the common good or public interest is identical with the totality of rational laws and institutions of a community and constitutes the 'objective will' of the community.

> Confronted with the claims made for the individual will, we must remember the fundamental conception that the objective will is rationality implicity or in conception, whether it be recognized or not by individuals, whether their whims be deliberately for it or not.
>
> (*PhR*, §258R)

But although Hegel differs from Rousseau by postulating a transcendent General Will which, as the 'objective will' of a rationally structured community, is more than the sum of individual wills, he agrees with him that such will must express or manifest itself in the actual thinking and willing of individual citizens, consciously identifying their subjective will with the 'objective will' and its needs. This union of subjective and objective will constitutes 'concrete freedom', which is higher than the abstract subjective and objective freedoms taken by themselves. It is through the *political* institutions of the ethical community that the reconciliation of the subjective and objective aspects of the will is effected.

In the *Philosophy of Right* the necessity of the subjective will assenting to laws and other requirements of the common good is argued by Hegel only with the reference to the monarch, as the official head of the political community, but in his *Philosophy of Mind*, the third part of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), this necessity is explicitly stated also with reference to the mass of citizens. In paragraph 544 of this work Hegel raises the question 'in what sense are we to understand the participation of private persons in state affairs?', and after ruling out superior intelligence or good will of the people as an adequate reason he answers his question as follows:

> The desirability of private persons taking part in public affairs is partly to be put in their concrete, and therefore more urgent, sense of general wants. But the true motive is the right of the community (collective) spirit to appear as an *externally universal* will, acting with orderly and express efficacy for the public concerns. By such satisfaction of this right it gets its own life quickened, and at the same time breathes fresh life in the administrative officials; who thus have it brought home

> to them that not merely have they to enforce duties but also to have regard to rights. Private citizens are in the state the incomparably greater number and form the multitude of such as are recognised as persons. Hence the rational will (will-reason) exhibits its existence in them as a preponderating majority of freemen, or in its 'reflectional universality' which has its actuality vouchsafed it as a participation in the sovereignty.[15]

The meaning of this somewhat poorly translated passage is fairly clear: the rational will of the ethical community, public, affairs must be mediated through the wills of the multitude and must take the form of 'an externally universal (general) will', i.e. one embodied in the particular wills of the citizens exercising political rights or participating in sovereignty. Only then does the general will become fully alive and acquire universal existence.

We may therefore conclude that Hegel has largely justified his claim that 'the [modern] state is the actuality of concrete freedom'. Freedom defined as the self-determination of a rational, moral and ethical agent reaches its fullest development only in a politically organized modern community, in which he interacts with other citizens and the government through free public debate, suffrage and representation. Political liberty, involved in these activities, is distinct from civil liberty. The *raison d'être* of civil society and the justification of civil freedom is the private interest and subjective choice of the individual *bourgeois* which, mediated through a system of economic and social relations as well as laws, institutions and authorities, promotes the interest of the ethical community only indirectly and in the last resort. The *raison d'être* of political community and the justification of political liberty are the good of the ethical community itself, the common good or the public interest, which the fully self-conscious and self-determined *citizen* promotes for its own sake. In so doing he actualizes his own deepest freedom and realizes his nature not simply as a particular but as a universal, communal being. Political freedom, although roughly hewn, is the indispensable coping stone of Hegel's theory of freedom which (so to speak) is the obverse of his theory of political community. And the two theories taken as a whole represent Hegel's adaptation of Plato's idea of 'ethical substance' to the modern world and the solution of Rousseau's problems of political association – how to live in community with others and yet remain a free individual.[16]

Notes

1 See Z. A. Pelczynski, 'The Hegelian conception of the state', in Z. A. Pelczynski (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1971). pp. 13, 14.

2 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. by H. B. Nisbet with an Introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge, 1975). Quotations from or references to this work in the text of the essay are abbreviated as '*LPhWH*'; the figures refer to page numbers. Elsewhere the work will be referred to as *Reason in History*.

3 See, for example, references to Montesquieu in G. W. F. Hegel, *Natural Law* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1975), p. 128, in *Hegel's Philosophy of Right (PhR)*, §3 and *Reason in History*, pp. 101–2.

4 Charles Taylor in *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1979) perceptively discusses the relation between community and culture and sums it up as follows: 'men are expressive beings by virtue of belonging to a culture, and a culture is sustained, nourished and handed down in a community' (p. 2).

5 Hegel clearly recognizes the importance of historical experiences, traditions and myths in creating national identity. 'If he is asked, any Englishman will say of himself and his fellow citizens that it is they who rule the East Indies and the oceans of the world, who dominate world trade, who have a parliament and trial by jury, etc. It is deeds such as these which give the nation its sense of identity' (*LPhWH*, 103).

6 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson, 3 vols. (London, 1892–6). References to this edition in the text are abbreviated as *LHPh*.

7 See the eloquent description of the ancient Greeks' and Romans' attitude to their country in G. W. F. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Chicago, 1948), reprinted as paperback by the University of Pennsylvania Press (Philadephia, 1971), pp. 154, 155.

8 In the Haldane–Simson translation of Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. III, Hegel gives four and a half pages to Hobbes – more than to any other modern political thinker. He also discusses him in the *Natural Law* essay.

9 *The Social Contract*, bk 1, ch. 7 (G. D. H. Cole's translation, Everyman's Library edition, London, 1913, p. 12).

10 See G. W. F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford, 1977), (BB), VI, A, C, 'Legal status'; *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York, 1956), pt III, sec. III ch. 1, 'Rome under the Emperors'; and the *Philosophy of Right*, §357.

11 See P. Stillman, 'Property, freedom and individuality in Hegel's and Marx's political thought', in *Property, NOMOS*, XXII, 1980.

12 For a full and illuminating discussion of 'ethical substance' see C. Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, 1975), ch. 14.

13 Of course, Hegel even more strongly emphasizes hereditary monarchy as a necessary feature of the modern state, and he is much more explicit about the powers of the crown in the constitution. His main argument is that a monarch embodies 'the "personality" of the state' in the only adequate way (*PhR*, §279) and that he actualizes the self-consciousness and self-determination of the political community by willing laws or consenting to them (§279, last paragraph of the Remark). The argument sounds very implausible today, when the right to uni-

versal political participation in a meaningful form is generally accepted and counts as an essential element of political freedom.

14 Hegel excludes women from participation in public affairs, arguing that their proper role in ethical life is played in the family. It is unclear from his remarks whether they are even full members of civil society in his view (see, for example, *PhR*, §166 and Addition).

15 Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace (Oxford, 1971), p. 272.

16 Valuable discussions of Hegel's concept of freedom (albeit with rather less attention to social and institutional context) can be found in the following essays: G. H. R. Parkinson, 'Hegel's concept of freedom', in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures*, V (1970–1); J. Plamenatz, 'History as the realization of freedom' and M. Riedel, 'Nature and freedom in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*', in Z. A. Pelczynski (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1971); R. L. Schacht, 'Hegel on freedom', in A. MacIntyre (ed.), *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972).

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The dialectic of civil society

K.-H. Ilting

In his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843) Karl Marx took the view that the so-called 'actual Idea' was presented in the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* 'as though it acted according to a determined principle and towards a determined end'.[1] However, Marx himself is in no doubt that in reality it is only to human individuals that principles and ends can be attributed; Marx takes the 'Idea', of which Hegel speaks, to be a 'predicate' whose actual 'subject' is acting men. He finds himself obligated to attribute to Hegel a metaphysical reinterpretation of this relationship; and he terms it 'logical, pantheistic mysticism'.[2]

Nobody who has studied the text of the *Philosophy of Right* can deny that in countless passages Hegel seems to speak the language of such 'logical mysticism'. He calls the family, civil society and the state moments of the 'Idea', which passes through the 'ethical substance' *en route* to its objectification (*PhR*, §157). In his account of this process, he attributes to the 'Idea' an 'interest' 'of which the members of civil society are as such unconscious' (*PhR*, §187). This 'development of the Idea' he expounds 'as proper activity of its rationality' which 'thinking, as something subjective', merely contemplates 'without for its part adding to it any ingredient of its own' (*PhR*, §31R).

Equally, an intelligent reader will have no difficulty in detecting the conception of such a self-propelled motion of the Idea. And it will not help to point out to him that Hegel has systematically developed this language of a 'pantheistic mysticism' in his *Logic*. He will insist that Marx is right to reject this metaphysical way of talking as misleading. Consequently, it seems perfectly understandable that the vast majority of commentaries on Hegel's political philosophy should simply ignore what appears to be its fantastic wrappings.[3]

Against this we must, of course, set the fact that Hegel himself rejects any such separation of thought and presentation, of content and form; it

is precisely 'unity of form and content' that he claims for his philosophy.[4] As Hegel himself sees it, the truly philosophical element in his *Philosophy of Right* is just that dialectical form of presentation which is consistently ignored in most commentaries on his political philosophy.[5] If we are to understand Hegel's thought expressed in his metaphysical way, as Marx did and any contemporary intelligent reader at first understands it, then it is Hegel's political philosophy itself and not just its form of presentation that is seen as fantastic. Only an exposition of the dialectical structure of his *Philosophy of Right* will make clear whether or not this is the case.

This essay, then, is concerned with examining the dialectic within Hegel's account of civil society. However, we shall not be discussing the dialectic of class antithesis which Hegel discovered in the historical development of early capitalist society (*PhR*, §246); we shall discuss the dialectic which governs the structure and progress of his presentation of civil society in the *Philosophy of Right*.[6] We shall soon find, of course, that the 'unity of form and content' at which Hegel aimed is not immediately apparent in his account. Our question will therefore be: what is the most appropriate and comprehensive standpoint from which Hegel's dialectic of civil society can be understood? The standpoint proposed here is the interpretation of the *Philosophy of Right* as a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom. Just as Hegel attempts in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* to depict the path by which human consciousness can attain to awareness of the conditions of its unreflected existence, so he also explains in his *Philosophy of Right* how the free self-consciousness of man may come to understand the institutions of law, morality, family, civil society and state as conditions of his freedom.

1. To begin with, it is not clear precisely wherein this 'unity of form and content' is meant to lie in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel emphasizes at several points that he is basing his account on the method developed in the *Science of Logic*:[7] viz. that in philosophy the concept develops itself out of itself so that the concept is 'a purely immanent progress, the engendering of its determinations' (*PhR*, §31). So the *Philosophy of Right* is, like the *Logic*, intended 'to develop the Idea – the Idea being the rational factor in any object of study – out of the concept' (*PhR*, §2). The content treated by the *Philosophy of Right* is, then, no longer to be 'extraneous material culled from elsewhere' (*PhR*, §31), but content produced from within the determinations of the concept (*PhR*, §31R; 176, 1f.). According to these comments of Hegel's 'unity of form and content' therefore means that the content of the *Philosophy of Right* is to be developed by the dialectical method of the *Logic* out of the concept of right.

Hegel expresses himself very much more cautiously in the Preface. Here he concedes that he has 'only added an explanatory note here and there about procedure and method' (58, 27f.; Knox, p. 2) and has made

no attempt 'to bring out and demonstrate the chain of logical argument in each and every detail' (59, 1f.; Knox, p. 2). This methodological incompleteness is apparently due to the 'concrete and intrinsically so varied character of the subject' of the *Philosophy of Right*, i.e. to its material (58, 30; Knox, p. 2). If this is what he means, then Hegel is implying that the content of his work has certainly not been developed from the concept of right but is encountered as something already given. And indeed he does confine himself in this context to the thesis that in speculative philosophy 'content is essentially bound up with form' (59, 9f.; Knox, p. 2). He constantly asserts that 'the whole, like the formation of its parts', is based 'on the logical spirit' (59, 5f.; Knox, p. 2). It follows from these comments that the 'unity of form and content' (73, 4; Knox, p. 12) aimed at is realized in the *Philosophy of Right* only in this limited sense.

2. How well justified these reservations are, by comparison with the much more positive remarks in the Introduction, is apparent in the transition from the family to civil society (*PhR*, §181). Here Hegel distinguishes between two modes of transition. 'In the natural way' the family makes the transition to civil society when it separates into a plurality of families; whereas in a speculative interpretation this transition is necessary, because 'the moments found together in the unity of the family . . . must be released from the concept to self-subsistent objective reality'.

We may take Hegel's all too sketchy remarks to mean that, in historical development, the enlarged family gives rise to kinship within which relations become increasingly external as time goes on. In this natural process of development,[8] the legal 'principle of personality' will bring about the transition to an essentially different formation of society where many blood relations are connected with one another 'as independent concrete persons'.[9]

The transition from family to civil society is entirely different when seen from the speculative viewpoint. Here the point is that in a family the 'moments' of the 'ethical Idea' are not yet released into independence; rights and duties are only indeterminate and vaguely delimited, and the members of a family still constitute a community in which individuals are not fully independent in their dealings with one another. If they do nevertheless become so, then the family has in fact already been dissolved (see *PhR*, §159). By contrast, the dialectic of civil society begins at the point where many members of different families enter into relations with one another as independent persons and where these relations produce a 'system of complete interdependence' (*PhR*, §183). The individuality which, in the family, is still tied to the community and to common interests and aims is thereby 'released into self-subsistent objective reality' (*PhR*, §181). As independent persons the individuals are now 'particulars' who are related to a 'universal', i.e. the sytem of mutual dependence, in

so far as they wish to realize their aims. It is this 'differentiation' between 'particularity' and 'universality' which, according to Hegel's speculative interpretation, determines the nature of civil society.

This explanation of the transition from the family to civil society has, Hegel claims, the character of necessity; he understands the family as the ethical Idea 'which is still in its concept'; but the moments bound up within its unity 'must' be released from the concept into self-subsistent reality (628, 13). If we ask wherein this necessity lies, we immediately recall the criticisms Karl Marx levelled at Hegel's 'logical mysticism'. Hegel's account of the development of the 'ethical Idea' in the *Philosophy of Right* obviously corresponds to his account of the Idea as such in the *Logic*. Just as there the Idea at the stage of the concept is described as the Idea of life, so here it appears as the institution of the family.[10] There the Idea at the stage of differentiation appears as the process of cognition, and here as the process of the formation of civil society; and the fully developed Absolute Idea of the *Logic* appears in the *Philosophy of Right* in the shape of the state. Marx is, therefore, apparently proved right: Hegel has not developed the 'necessity' of the transition from family to civil society from the concept of the family; he has imported it from his speculative logic into the *Philosophy of Right*.[11]

Faced with this admittedly obvious accusation, we should note that, according to Hegel's formulation, the individuals 'bound up' within the community of the family are 'released into self-subsistent objective reality' in civil society. Now the theme of the *Philosophy of Right* is the development of the Idea of freedom.[12] So we should not forget that it is precisely in connection with the development of this Idea that Hegel asserts the necessity of the transition from family to civil society. Whatever the ways in which early capitalist civil society may have developed historically from a patriarchal social constitution, and whatever the explanatory models which Hegel took over from the *Logic* to describe the family, civil society and the state, his decisive argument for the transition from family to civil society is that this transition is to be explained as a liberation of the individual into 'self-subsistent objective reality'. In the context of the development of the Idea of freedom, civil society appears to him to be a stage of development which leads beyond the actualization of freedom already attained within the family. The parallels between the development of the Idea as such in the third part of the *Logic* and the development of the Idea of freedom in the third part of the *Philosophy of Right* can be explained thus: both in the *Philosophy of Right* and at the corresponding point in the *Logic*, on Hegel's view, there takes place a liberation of the moments which were not yet released into independence in the preceding stage of development.[13]

It seems, then, that the transition from the family to civil society confirms what Hegel told us in his prefacing remarks on method: the

concept of freedom here develops 'from within itself' in such a way that its development 'is purely immanent progress, the engendering of its determinations' (*PhR*, §31). At all events it is clear, even by now, that this cannot mean some mystical self-propulsion of the concept. For this movement is not that of a free-floating concept whose development Hegel and his readers have 'only to watch' (*PhR*, §31R; 176, 8f.); we are, rather, dealing with a philosophical reconstruction of the Idea of freedom, which Hegel, as author, undertakes to carry out in his *Philosophy of Right*.[14] This reconstruction is based on the concept of freedom; and in the dialectical development of this concept, which Hegel describes in the transition from the family to civil society, the progress consists of an 'immanent development of the thing itself' (*PhR*, §2).

It would not, of course, be true to say that Hegel had likewise developed the institution of the family or early capitalist society from the concept of freedom. One of the 'determinations' of the concept of freedom, which emerges from Hegel's dialectical reconstruction of the development of this concept, is indeed the independence of individuals in a 'system of complete interdependence'. But Hegel did not develop this system itself from the concept of freedom (as one might suppose) but from the anthropological and historical conditions for the satisfaction of human needs (cf. *PhR*, §§190ff. and §185R). In his reconstruction of the development of the concept of freedom, the historical existence of early capitalist society is presupposed as a given content.

This appears even more clearly at the beginning of his account of civil society (*PhR*, §§182ff.). Hegel identifies 'the concrete person who is himself the object of his particular aims' as a 'principle of civil society', and he immediately adds:

> but the particular person is essentially so related to other particular persons that each establishes himself and finds satisfaction by means of the others and at the same time purely and simply by means of the form of universality, the second principle here.
>
> (*PhR*, §182)

Hegel thereby accepts as given the existence of a society in which there is a highly developed division of labour, and thence everything required for its continued existence: civil and criminal law, peaceful conditions secured by police, a system of justice which works adequately, and institutions for the protection of individuals and for the development of their capacities. But Hegel's account does not mention these necessary conditions for the existence of early capitalist civil society until very much later; and not until he moves on to his account of the state (*PhR*, §256) does he make clear that such a society can unfold only within a modern state.

3. Only with strong reservations, then, can we endorse Hegel's claim that he did not import the subject matter of his account in the *Philosophy of Right* from outside, but developed it from the concept of the thing in question. If the concept with which this work is concerned is the Idea of freedom, then we cannot expect Hegel to succeed at all in developing the contents of his account of family, civil society and state from the concept of freedom. His dialectical method of an immanent conceptual development simply cannot, contrary to his assurances in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, be transferred directly from his metaphysical *Logic*, which is concerned with pure concepts, into political philosophy which is part of 'empirical philosophy' (*Realphilosophie*).

However, at the end of the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, we find a different and more 'concrete' indication of how the desired 'unity of form and content' is to be understood in a philosophical account:

> Form in its most concrete signification is reason as speculative knowing, and content is reason as the substantial essence of actuality, whether ethical or natural. The known identity of these two is the philosophical Idea.
>
> (73, 15–19; Knox, p. 12)

Here he no longer speaks of reconstructing the content from the concept of the thing itself by means of a dialectical development of the concept; here content is 'intrinsically' rational reality, and form is the knowing which grasps the rationality of the actual. Thus, in fact, two distinct philosophical tasks emerge: the reconstruction of actuality as rational, and the exposition of the route by which speculative knowing arrives at this insight. In both cases, according to Hegel's methodological idea, dialectical development would proceed immanently and would produce the conceptual determinations immanently; but only at the end would the result be the same. In that way the 'philosophical Idea' would then have been realized.[15]

The fact that we do indeed have two different tasks here can easily be demonstrated in the case of rational natural law. The philosophical reconstruction of a universally binding law is a normative discipline; it must, as for example, Hobbes, Kant or Rawls have argued, begin with the concept of a rational natural law itself, and from that concept develop the conditions for a legally ordered communal life.[16] Conversely, an exposition of the path by which speculative knowing arrives at its insight into the universal validity of the norms of right would have to begin with the everyday consciousness of right; it could even be described as a 'phenomenology of the consciousness of right'.

It is equally clear, however, that in his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel does not attempt to find separate solutions to these two philosophical

problems. His dialectical development of the concept of freedom is intended both to show that the conditions of common life in a modern state meet the requirements of reason, and also to indicate the path by which speculative knowing can attain to this insight into the rationality of the modern state.

4. We can see very clearly from the end of Hegel's account of civil society that this inevitably leads to highly undesirable difficulties. Here the reader is suddenly informed that the state is the 'true ground of the family and of civil society' (*PhR*, §256R; 691, vide 11.16). Although in the *Philosophy of Right* the state makes its appearance only after family and civil society, it is, in Hegel's words, 'in reality' prior, since the family can develop itself into civil society only within a state.

Nor should this be taken as merely an assertion about the course of history. For in civil society as Hegel describes it the assumption is always made that there is a state which establishes the law, gives the law validity, maintains peace and order, pursues a social policy and guarantees the effectiveness of social institutions. Only when all this is taken as assured can members of early capitalist society pursue their private ends, without taking cognizance of the liberal legal state in which they live. It is, then, not only in historical reality, but also in Hegel's theory, that the state is seen to be prior to the family and civil society and to be their 'true ground'.

In a philosophical reconstruction of common life in a modern state, what is 'in reality' prior[17] would be the foundation, and as such would be dealt with at the very beginning. Since this is so, we must ask ourselves why, in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, the state does not appear until the end. It is the knowing described by Hegel which through its progressive insight into the rationality of the ethical world at last comes to grasp the reality of the state. This also shows which of the two problems distinguished above takes precedence in Hegel's work; in its structure, the *Philosophy of Right* is not a deductive theory of the institutions of a modern state, comparable to the theories, say, of Hobbes or Kant, but a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom, i.e. a philosophical reconstruction of the way by which an individual might become conscious of his freedom as it is realized in a modern state.[18]

However, since Hegel tries to develop, within the framework of a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom, a theory of the modern state as well, it is quite inevitable that endless difficulties should arise from the linking of these two distinct problems. What is fundamental in the theory does not emerge in the exposition until the end because an individual who becomes conscious of his freedom arrives at the consciousness of the institutional foundations of his freedom only at the end; and what is fundamental in a theory of the modern state can only inadequately be treated within a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom. In

his exposition, Hegel is therefore constantly forced to start from premises the justification for which he is unable to explain; and even when he does reach these premises in his exposition, he frames his questions in such a way that he can not give satisfactory reasons for these premises.

Hegel usually makes the tacit assumption that early capitalist society can only develop when the state has set up an effective legal system for the protection of private property.[19] But even where he turns his attention to the exposition of this legal system (*PhR*, §208), he can only assert that 'the right of property' is already in existence 'in its recognized actuality'. He simply declares that 'the principle of this system of needs' possesses 'the universality of freedom'; this universality is, he says, admittedly present only 'abstractly', as 'right of property'; but this right is, in civil society, 'no longer merely implicit but has attained its recognized actuality'. Likewise in the next paragraph, he can only reinforce this observation, not justify it. 'It is this very sphere . . . which gives abstract right . . . determinate existence' (*PhR*, §209). Whereas all the discussions from Hobbes down to Kant and Fichte made quite clear that the right of property, which had only 'provisional' validity in the state of nature (i.e. Hegel's 'implicitly valid right'), becomes a 'peremptory' right only in the state,[20] we certainly cannot say the same for Hegel at this point.[21] Rather, he obscures the matter by attributing to civil society the power to give right 'determinate existence'. What he means is this: only as civil society 'develops' (*bildet*) do the historical conditions arise in which the Idea of unrestricted equality of rights can be actualized. But a modern state is the first prerequisite for this – a point which Hegel cannot discuss or justify here; nor does his way of putting his question within the framework of his theory of the state permit him to supply the missing justification.

Hegel's account of civil society leaves the origin of public authority (*Polizei*) and corporations just as vague as the origins of positive right. Hegel treats them as something already given, and turns immediately to the functions which they are meant to perform in civil society (cf. *PhR*, §§229–31). Here, too, the reasons for this striking omission lie in the fact that in his exposition the phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom takes precedence over the actual theory of the modern state: Hegel wishes above all to expound the doctrine that members of early capitalist society should acknowledge the realization of their freedom within positive civil and criminal law, in the public authority and in the corporations. This interest is so prominent in the structure of his exposition that one is tempted to think that he occasionally loses sight of the other problem, the development of a theory of the modern state. He wishes, however, to do justice equally to both problems, as is evident from his remark that his account of the family and of civil society contained the 'philosophic proof of the concept of the state' (*PhR*, §256R; 691, 12f.).

5. It is fairly clear that Hegel's account of civil society primarily outlines the path which individuals who have already attained self-subsistent reality must travel to become citizens 'capable and worthy' of being 'the actuality of the Idea' (*PhR*, §187R; 639, 2f.). Of course, Hegel does also describe this development as a process which must be undergone not by individuals but by the 'principle of particularity'.

> But in developing itself independently to totality, the principle of particularity passes over into universality, and only there does it attain its truth and the right to which its positive actuality is entitled. This unity is not the identity which the ethical order requires, because at this level, that of division (§184), both principles are self-subsistent. It follows that this unity is present here not as freedom but as necessity, since it is by compulsion that the particular rises to the form of universality and seeks and gains its stability in that form.
>
> (*PhR*, §186)

But if the 'principle of particularity' transforms itself into 'universality' in the way which Hegel describes, then this means, in his own words, that at the same time 'the particular' (individuals) raises itself to the 'form of universality'.

It is the dynamic of civil society itself as a system of mutual interdependence that necessitates the creation of institutions which limit the private autonomy of individuals bent on their 'selfish ends' (*PhR*, §183). The 'principle' of these institutions and of their activities (administration of justice, police, communal and social policy, corporate bodies) can no longer be the private interests of individuals; indeed these institutions must at the same time act in the public ('universal') interest. But if, in this way, the 'principle' of particularity thus turns more and more into 'universality', then this means, for individuals who are active in these institutions or who depend on their activities, that they too, as 'particulars' are also increasingly raised 'to the form of universality' the more they are forced to consider public interests while pursuing their private ends.[22]

The necessity of the development which determines the dialectical structure of this account of civil society is based, according to Hegel, precisely on the point that the principle of particularity 'develops itself independently to totality'; inasmuch as the principle of private autonomy asserts itself in modern society with increasing force, this society is increasingly obliged to relinquish its exclusive devotion to private interests. In Hegel's view, it is in the last resort this dialetic of particular and universal which has necessitated and determined the development of institutions for the administration of justice, for the protection or creation

of peace and order, and for the realization of a communal and social policy in the historical development of the modern state.

But when Hegel, in the dialectical structure of his account of civil society, describes how the 'particular' raises itself stage by stage to 'the form of universality', the necessity for this historical development remains just as obscure as does the fact that these institutions and activities can only develop their effectiveness within the modern state. Hegel presupposes both the dialectics of this historical development and the existence of the modern state in order to describe through the structure of his account how the relationship of particularity and universality develops dialectically, stage by stage.

Whereas in early capitalist society, as a system of mutual interdependence, private interests and general economic necessities still stand in unmediated opposition to one another (*PhR*, §18); but the administration of justice already represents a first step towards overcoming this 'level of division' (*PhR*, §186). It already leads back towards 'the unity of the implicit universal with the subjective particular' (*PhR*, §229). But this unity is developed only imperfectly in the administration of justice; for 'the universal' here signifies civil and criminal law, and it actualizes this unity only 'in the single case', namely, in annulling 'offences against property and personality' (*PhR*, §230). The activity of the public authority extends this unity 'to the whole ambit of particularity' (*PhR*, §229) by effectively protecting the right to 'undisturbed safety of person and property' (*PhR*, §230). None the less, this 'unification' of particular and universal remains 'relative' (*PhR*, §229) inasmuch as the separate interests of individuals are placed under state protection. Only in the activity of corporations does this unification extend to the entire existence of individuals, namely, to the 'securing of every single person's livelihood and welfare' (*PhR*, §230). This does, indeed, actualize the 'concrete totality' of the unification of particular and universal; but even here, as in civil society at large, this totality is limited to the private existence of individuals (*PhR*, §229). According to Hegel, the full unity of particular and universal is therefore achieved only in the state as 'the absolutely universal end and its absolute actuality' (*PhR*, §256). The 'level of division' of particular and universal, characteristic of civil society, is thereby overcome.

This dialectical development of the relationship of particularity and universality which determines the course of the exposition does, however, presuppose a subject which undergoes this development and changes its 'standpoint' stage by stage. This subject is, strictly speaking, civil society itself as an ordering of common human life, which is divided into several 'spheres' or 'systems', namely, the system of mutual economic dependence ('system of needs'), the system of civil and criminal law, and the system of social welfare. Accordingly it is in this sense that Hegel calls

the subject which, in its development, passes through these spheres 'Spirit' (*Geist*). It is Spirit which

> attains its actuality only by creating a dualism within itself, by submitting itself to physical needs and the chain of these external necessities, and so imposing on itself this barrier and this finitude, and finally by maturing [*bildet*] itself inwardly even when under this barrier until it overcomes it and attains its objective reality in the finite.
>
> (*PhR*, §187R; 637, 23–7)

But, translated into an interpretation of concrete relations, this only means that in the economic system of early capitalist society individuals facing the general conditions of their common life find themselves at a standpoint of division and consequently at the standpoint of limitation and finitude; but this very finitude of their standpoint obliges them to overcome the limitations of their initial condition and to develop their subjective interests further towards 'objectivity'. This is why Hegel also describes this process as the course of development through which 'the subjective will itself attains an objectivity in which alone it is for its part capable and worthy of being the actuality of the Idea' (*PhR*, §187R; 639, 1–3). What Hegel describes as the dialectic of civil society is, according to this, a process of 'education' (ibid., 638, 18), in which the subjective will raises itself from the standpoint of the particular to the 'form of the universal' (ibid., 21).

It is, however, possible to speak of such an educational process in two quite different senses: as a historical progression in which private persons in early capitalist society increasingly develop a political consciousness, and as a hermeneutic process which Hegel traces in the dialectical construction of his account of civil society. Whereas Hegel goes into this historical educational process only in his account of the economic system (cf. *PhR*, §197), his account as a whole should be understood as a description of the route by which 'speculative knowing' must travel in order to get from the standpoint of the particular (or the *bourgeois*) to the 'standpoint of the ethical life' of the state (or the *citoyen*) (cf. *PhR*, §33R; 182, 16). When the reader realizes how the principle of particularity, 'in developing itself independently to totality', transforms itself 'into universality', then it becomes clear to him that the principle of particularity can have 'its truth and the right to which its positive actuality is entitled' (*PhR*, §186) only in this universality. He recognizes herewith that the limitation of self-awareness within which private persons are confined in the economic system is increasingly removed in the system of justice and in the system of social welfare, and is finally removed altogether when the standpoint of ethical life is reached. Hegel indicates in advance that the reader, from the standpoint of the *citoyen*, will then

be able to see that the standpoint of the private person is justifiable within certain limits.

6. In a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom as it has just been described, we must always distinguish the standpoint adopted by the observer from the standpoint of its object, i.e. of consciousness on its route to self-consciousness. In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel has unfortunately omitted to specify in each instance the standpoint from which his formulations are to be understood. It is therefore often possible for misunderstandings to arise as to whether he is speaking from the standpoint of phenomenal consciousness which is the object of his observations, or whether he is speaking from the standpoint which he himself adopts for his observation and description. In his account of civil society, this difficulty is less formidable than in other parts of his work. But even here the reader must be clear in his own mind that many of Hegel's statements formulated in the language of a 'logical mysticism' become comprehensible once we distinguish these two standpoints.

When, for instance, Hegel distinguishes between the interests pursued by the members of civil society and the 'interest of the Idea, an interest of which these members of civil society are as such unconscious' (*PhR*, §187), we are in no doubt that the expression 'Idea' simply denotes the standpoint adopted by Hegel in his account. As long as the members of civil society are pursuing their private ends, economic and social relations appear to them to be no more than the conditions to which they must submit in order to attain the fulfilment of their needs. But when they 'determine their knowing, willing and acting in a universal way and make themselves links in this chain of social connections', then they see (and so do we who are observing this process with regard to the formation of a consciousness of citizenship) that they thereby raise themselves 'to formal freedom and formal universality of knowing and willing'[23] (ibid.). This is the viewpoint from which the 'formal' education (*Bildung*), accomplished in civil society, is of 'interest'.

A similar interpretation can be given to passages in which Hegel speaks as though the 'Idea' works in civil society by 'imparting a characteristic embodiment' (*PhR*, §184) to the 'moments' of particularity and universality. From the standpoint of the state, which we adopt for our observation of civil society, it is clear to us that the members of early capitalist society can only pursue their private interests because the modern state gives them the opportunity to do so. We also see that individuals pursue their aims under the conditions of prevailing social relations which, for their part, presuppose a modern state as their basis. This is the modern liberal state which guarantees its citizens the right to a private existence and which allows social relations to develop freely so that they can prove themselves to be the 'ground', 'necessary form' and 'power' over all private ends of individuals. It is in this sense that Hegel can say that

the state or the (ethical) Idea imparts 'a characteristic embodiment' to individuals and to social relations.

Up to this point, this interpretation of the relationship of 'particularity' and 'universality' in early capitalist society is clear enough; but Hegel goes beyond it when he characterizes this social structure as an 'ethical order, split into its extremes and lost' (*PhR*, §184). For this amounts to a declaration that civil society is a stage of development through which the ethical Idea passes on the way to its actualization. Just as he explains the family as the ethical Idea 'still in its concept' (*PhR*, §181; 628, 12f.), so he now establishes civil society as 'the Idea's abstract moment, its moment of reality'[24] (*PhR*, §184).

This interpretation becomes comprehensible if, from a historical point of view, we apply it to the development of the Idea of the modern state. The 'immediate substantiality of mind' in the family (*PhR*, §158) then corresponds to the kingdom of the ancient Orient, built on the 'patriarchal and religious principle', and also to the 'substance of ethical life' of the Greek polis (cf. *PhR*, §185R; 645, 3.17); the historical origin of civil society as a 'system of the ethical order, split into its extremes and lost' is, then, to be sought in the era of the Roman emperors.[25]

However, this transference of diachronic stages of development to the synchronic structure of the modern state does cause a difficulty. The ancient Oriental kingdoms, the Greek polis and the Roman Empire are actual political communities, whereas the family and civil society, as Hegel describes them, presuppose a state as their basis, and specifically the modern state. This difference is obscured when Hegel characterizes civil society as a 'system of the ethical order, split into its extremes and lost'.[26] The impression can arise that he means to interpret civil society, as an independent stage of development of a mystical subject, of 'Spirit' or 'Mind', occurring between family and state.

It is in this sense that we can understand the proposition, 'Mind attains its actuality only by creating a dualism within itself' (*PhR*, §187R; 637, 22f.). But the context tells us that Hegel, from a historical point of view, opposes the Rousseauistic 'idea that the state of nature is one of innocence and that there is a simplicity of manners in uncivilized [*ungebildeter*] peoples' (ibid., 13f.) to the formation of a society based on the division of labour in which men overcome their original 'crudity' (638, 1) and raise themselves to 'the form of universality' (ibid., 5). What Hegel thus describes, in a semi-mystical way of speaking, as the history of the development of 'Mind', thereby shows itself to be the result of a paradigmatic reconstruction of the development of social systems from the standpoint of the Idea of freedom as actualized in the modern state.

When Hegel elsewhere speaks of a 'development of ethical life from its immediate phase through civil society, the phase of division, to the state' (*PhR*, §256R; 691, 9–11), he yet again seems to envisage the idea

of an identical subject which undergoes this process. But when he asserts that this development is 'the philosophic proof of the concept of the state' (ibid., 12f.) it is immediately clear that he is speaking not about a real process but about his own dialectical reconstruction of the concept of the state. In this reconstruction, family and civil society emerge as derivative formations ('ideal moments', ibid. 5) which are always dependent on the state for their existence. But, above all, it is apparent in Hegel's account of civil society that the union of the particular with the universal, which is achieved in the corporation, is still incomplete because the aim of the corporation 'is restricted and finite' (*PhR*, §256). The notion that this unification is not fully completed until the members of civil society have raised their 'particular self-consciousness' (*PhR*, §258) to the universality of an 'absolutely universal end' (*PhR*, §256) is therefore crucial for the transition from civil society to the state. Since Hegel regards the state as the 'absolute actuality' of this end, the only 'philosophic proof of the concept of the state' which is worthy of the name lies in the demonstration of the necessity of this transition.

7. When Kant attributes 'truth' to the 'concept of morality', he means that this concept has 'application to any possible object' inasmuch as the highest principle of morality is binding for this entity.[27] Thus Kant also speaks of a 'deduction' of the categorical imperative; what is meant is the 'justification of its objective and universal validity'.[28] Hegel, too, with similar implications, speaks of the 'truth' of the 'proof' or of the 'deduction' of the concept of right (*PhR*, §2).

The 'philosophic proof of the concept of the state' is thus intended to demonstrate that reason is the 'substantial essence' (*PhR*, Preface, 73.17; Knox, p. 12) of the modern state. But the modern state proves itself as rational when it can be presented as an institution in which the Idea of freedom is actualized. Accordingly, when Hegel claims that he has proved the 'concept of the state' in his account of civil society, he must mean that he has shown that the Idea of freedom is actualized only in the modern state.

Now Hegel made no attempt whatsoever to conduct his proof by expounding the actualization of the Idea of freedom in right and morality as well as in the family, civil society and the state itself. On the contrary, he traced the various degrees to which individuals had attained to consciousness of freedom at the 'standpoint of right' (*PhR*, §§45R; 216, 8; and 57R; 242, 3.26) and morality (*PhR*, §105), and also as members of the family, civil society and the state. In so doing he constantly tried, though often only by giving obscure hints, to show that the 'individual self-consciousness' had not yet risen to its full 'universality' (cf. *PhR*, §258), and had therefore still some way to go beyond its present stage of development. At the end of his account, then, Hegel has not actually proved the 'concept of the state'. What he *has* done is to show that, for

members of civil society in their corporations, freedom is indeed actualized as the right to an assured private existence (cf. *PhR*, §255), and yet that this exclusive devotion to their private interests must be relinquished if the actualization of freedom is to reach perfection in activity for the 'absolutely universal end' of the state. The argument that members of civil society must, in the interests of the Idea of freedom, progress from the standpoint of the *bourgeois* to that of the *citoyen* is, however, no 'proof of the concept of the state'.

Only when we give a historical interpretation of the 'development of ethical life from its immediate phase through civil society, the phase of division, to the state' (*PhR*, §256R; 691, 9–11) does this account take on the character of a justification of the Idea of the modern state. It then appears as the historical development of that concept of the state which has its origin in the Greek polis, and which, owing to the Christian religion and the de-politicized society of the Roman imperial era, has absorbed the principle of particularity. In this way the combination of the Greek principle of a free political community (*PhR*, §124R; 446, 20) with the 'right to subjective freedom' in the institutions of the modern state may be understood as the product of previous history. In so far as Hegel's account, thus understood, shows reason to be the 'substantial essence' of the 'ethical world', it may be allowed to count as a 'philosophic proof of the concept of the state'.

8. Two reservations must nevertheless be made, and both concern Hegel's form of presentation, namely, his conceptual language and his dialectic.

Our interpretation has shown that, contrary to all appearances, Hegel is not presenting us with a metaphysic which one could characterize as a 'logical, pantheistic mysticism'. Where he does use metaphysical conceptual language, we can translate his formulations into ordinary conceptual terms so that his way of speaking acquires a readily accessible meaning. Indeed, there can be no doubt that this is the intended meaning of these often profoundly obscure formulations. Furthermore, we can recognize that Hegel's difficult conceptual language has an immeasurably great advantage: it enables him to express incredibly complex conceptual relationships in a few words. In this respect, Hegel's texts resemble in many ways the fragments of the pre-Socratic philosophers; and indeed a work such as the *Philosophy of Right* must be interpreted in much the same way as the aphorisms of a Heraclitus.

However, these gains in complexity and richness of reference are purchased at a price, namely, the need for interpretation. This comes not only from the fact that it is necessary to translate Hegel's conceptual language into a rendering which displays its manifold meanings. In the interpretation it also becomes clear that this conceptual language itself has multiple meanings. This holds not only for Hegel's terminology – if

one wishes to allow this expression for those conceptual terms in his philosophical language which have characteristic meanings divergent from ordinary speech. The significance which interpretation can attribute to his arguments is often also multiple. It is certain that Marx is wrong in attempting to tie Hegel's metaphysical mode of expression to its apparent mysticism; but it is equally certain that Hegel undeniably gives some grounds for such misreadings.

This is the reason why we cannot accept Hegel's claim to have given a 'philosophic proof of the concept of the state' in his account of the family and civil society, although we can make that claim comprehensible. Hegel is unable to produce a philosophical proof in the strict sense of the word because his conceptual language is not suited for the purpose. In fact, he has shown only that the modern state – i.e. the state of his time with regard to its remote future possibilities – is essentially rational because it can be, and should be, conceived as an institutional actualization of the Idea of freedom. This is an explanation with a practical purpose, not a philosophical proof.

There is an additional reason why Hegel can not produce a kind of 'proof' of the Idea of the modern state, i.e. a theoretical demonstration and justification of the principles on which it rests. His dialectical method as practised in the *Philosophy of Right* is unsuitable for the purpose. Proceeding by way of a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom brings Hegel only to a 'reconciliation with the actuality' (*PhR*, Preface, 73, 7; Knox, p. 12) of the modern state, not to a rational theory which would have made the state in its historical forms an object suitable for a critique. If, in his political philosophy, Hegel has in many ways 'accommodated' himself to existing political conditions, this can doubtless be explained not merely by the pressure of these conditions but also by the weakness of his dialectical theory of the state as a phenomenology of the consciousness of freedom. For it has already reached its goal when 'reason as speculative knowing' and 'reason as the substantial essence of actuality whether ethical or natural' are brought into a 'known identity' (ibid., 73, 16–18; Knox, p. 12). At this point, the question should rather be: how may Hegel's insight that reason is 'the substantial essence of actuality' be formulated and established in a rational theory of the modern state? Only in such a theory, it seems to me, would the problem posed by Hegel be truly solved.

Notes

1 *Marx–Engels Werke*, 1, 205; Joseph O'Malley (ed.), *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right by Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 7.

2 *MEW*, 1, 206; O'Malley's translation, p. 8.

3 A lecture by Iring Fetscher on the contemporary relevance of Hegel's political philosophy, and the ensuing discussion in R. Heede and J. Ritter (eds), *Hegel-Bilanz: Zur Aktualität und Inaktualität der Philosophie Hegels* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973, pp. 193–230) may be cited as an example.

4 *PhR*, Preface, 73, 14; Knox, p. 12. Unless otherwise stated, source references (page and line) refer to the second volume of my four-volume edition: G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818–1831* (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt, 1973–4). All quotations from Hegel are taken from T. M. Knox's translation, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Oxford, 1962), referred to in the main text as 'Knox'.

5 Cf. *Phr*, Preface (58, 8–10; 59, 6–10; 74, 24–6) and §§2 (82, 2–5) and 31 (174, 8–10; 176, 1–12).

6 Excellent comments on Hegel's dialectical interpretation of civil society can be found in the essays by Francesco Valentini, 'Aspetti della "Società Civile" hegeliana', in *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, 1968, pp. 92–112 and by Giuliano Marini, 'Aspetti sistematici della Società civile hegeliana', in *Filosofia*, xxviii, pp. 19–40; see also his *Libertà soggettiva e libertà oggettiva nella Filosofia del diritto hegeliana* (Naples, 1978).

7 See *PhR*, Preface (58; 26ff.); §§2R (88, 14f.), 7R (126, 10ff.), 31 (1974, 8ff.) and 141R (538, 2f.).

8 Hegel is here doubtlessly orientating himself on the theory which bases the origin of the village community in the family, to be found in Aristotle's *Politics* (A, 2; 1252b, 15f.).

9 Hegel explains the connection in more detail in the remarks to §§124 and 185. He says there that the 'principle of the self-subsistent inherently infinite personality . . . dawned in an inward form in the Christian religion and in an external form . . . in the Roman world' (636, 3–7).

10 Hegel draws attention to this connection in *PhR*, §161.

11 Cf. Marx, *MEW*, 1, 213; Hegel 'does not develop his thought out of what is objective, but what is objective in accordance with a ready-made thought which has its origin in the abstract sphere of logic' (O'Malley's translation, p. 14). *MEW*, 1, 216: 'Logic is not used to prove the nature of the state, but the state is used to prove the logic' (O'Malley's translation, p. 18).

12 In *PhR*, §4, Hegel explains that the freedom of the will is the 'point of origin' for his development of the Idea of right; he expounds the system of right as 'the realm of freedom made actual'. This conception determines the dialectical structure and the course of his exposition throughout the *Philosophy of Right*.

13 Cf. *Logic*, III, 3, 2 (*Werke*, v, 263, 16f.): 'The elevation of the concept over life is that its reality is the concept-form released into universality'.

14 In *PhR*, §2, Hegel says expressly that the 'self-movement of the Idea' means nothing other than the philosophical reconstruction of the development of an Idea: the philosophy of right's 'task is to develop the Idea – the Idea being the rational factor in any object of study – out of the concept, or, what is the same thing, to look on at the proper immanent development of the thing itself'. In §31R Hegel says, rather more precisely, that 'thinking, as something subjective', merely observes the development of the Idea. According to Hegel, then, we must distinguish between philosophical reconstruction, which develops the reason of an object, and subjective thinking, which observes this development 'without for its part adding to it any ingredient of its own' (176, 8f.). As a philosophical method, dialectic is, then, that reconstruction of an object of knowledge which merely lays bare whatever implicit assumptions it contains. Inasmuch as this method also determines the presentation of a philosophical work, dialectic is also

a mode of presentation. H. Fr. Fulda ('Hegels Dialektik als Begriffsbewegung und Darstellungsweise', in R. P. Hortsmann (ed.), *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), pp. 124–74) uses the expression 'mode of presentation' in the sense of 'a linguistic form which takes on a certain philosophical programme in its execution' (p. 128). For this reason 'movement of concept' and 'mode of presentation' diverge rather more strongly in his analysis.

15 The 'philosophical Idea', thus defined, corresponds to what, in the *Logic* is, as 'absolute Idea', the result of the movement of knowledge.

16 I have described this beginning of a rational theory of right in my essay 'Wahrheit und Verbindlichkeit', in Kuno Lorenz (ed.), *Konstruktionen versus Positionen* (Berlin and New York, 1979), II, 115–45.

17 This is an Aristotelian expression. Cf. Arist., *Met.* A, 8; 989a15f.: 'That which is later in generation is prior in nature (φύσει).' Similarly θ, 8; 1050a4f.: actuality (ἐνέργεια) is prior in substantiality (οὐσία) 'because things that are posterior in becoming are prior in form (εἶδος) and in substantiality (οὐσία)'. Thus Aristotle distinguishes what is prior in knowledge 'for us' (πρὸς ἡμᾶς πρότερον) and what is prior in nature (φύσει) or 'in itself' (ἁπλῶς). Cf. *Post. Anal.* A, 2; 71b33: what is 'for us' posterior is 'in itself' prior. (Cf. *Phys.* A, 1; 184a16–21: the road to knowledge begins with what is more familiar 'to us' and leads to what is more familiar 'by nature'.) Hegel took over these conceptions from Aristotle; but, departing from Aristotle, he distinguishes terminologically between what is known 'in itself' or 'to us' as observers and what is 'established for it' (viz. consciousness on the way to its knowledge). I have dealt in detail with this connection between the Aristotelian theory of knowledge and Hegel's dialectic in my sketch 'Zur Dialektik in der Rechtsphilosophie' (in *Hegel-Jahrbuch 1975*, ed. W. R. Beyer, Cologne, 1976, pp. 38–45).

18 Cf. my essay 'Rechtsphilosophie als Phänomenologie des Bewusstseins der Freiheit', in Dieter Heinrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (eds), *Hegels Philosophie des Rechts: die Theorie der Rechtsformen und ihre Logik* (Stuttgart, 1982).

19 Hegel states explicitly that the problem of pauperism is connected with the protection of private property in early capitalist society: 'dependence and want increase *ad infinitum*, and the material to meet these is permanently barred to the needy man because it consists of external objects with the special character of being property, the embodiment of the free will of others' (*PhR*, §195). Cf. *PhR*, §189.

20 Cf. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 'Theory of Right', §15.

21 Not until *PhR*, §299 is it stated that 'laws dealing with all sorts of private rights' are part of the competence of the law-giving authority. In §261R Hegel emphasizes that 'laws concerning the rights of persons' depend on the 'specific character' of a state.

22 This dual aspect of a movement of the particular to the universal in Hegel's account of civil society, the development of the universal in its institutions and the raising of individuals to universality has been very well described by Giuliano Marini, *Libertà*, pp. 50ff.

23 The 'formal' freedom and universality of the *bourgeois* which Hegel is discussing here is to be distinguished from the 'substantial freedom' of the *citoyen* (*PhR*, §257).

24 According to this view, then, the state is 'the actuality of the ethical Idea' (*PhR*, §257).

25 *PhR*, §185R (636, 3–7): 'The principle of the self-subsistent inherently infinite personality of the individual . . . linked with abstract universality' 'dawned . . . in the Roman world.'

26 A bit later (ibid., 21f.) Hegel explains: 'it is the Idea of the state itself which disrupts itself into these two moments' (viz. family and civil society). This formulation is presumably based on an oversight: the state is indeed the basis of family and civil society, but precisely for this reason it is not absorbed into them.

27 Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Akademie-Ausgabe, IV, 408; Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. & ed. L. W. Beck (Chicago, 1949), p. 68.

28 Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Akademie-Ausgabe, V, 46; Beck's translation, p. 156.

Hegel on property and personality

Dudley Knowles

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, mid-October, with the sun not shining and a look of hard wet rain in the clearness of the foothills. I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed detective ought to be. I was calling on four million dollars.

The main hallway of the Sternwood place was two stories high. Over the entrance doors, which would have let in a troop of Indian elephants, there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armour rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying.

There were French doors at the back of the hall, beyond them a wide sweep of emerald grass to a white garage, in front of which a slim dark young chauffeur in shiny black leggings was dusting a maroon Packard convertible. Beyond the garage were some decorative trees trimmed as carefully as poodle dogs. Beyond them a large greenhouse with a domed roof. Then more trees and beyond everything the solid, uneven, comfortable line of the foothills.

On the east side of the hall a free staircase, tile-paved, rose to a gallery with a wrought-iron railing and another piece of stained-glass romance. Large hard chairs with rounded red plush seats were backed into the vacant spaces of the wall round about. They didn't look as if anybody had ever sat in them. In the middle of the west wall there

> was a big empty fireplace with a brass screen in four hinged panels, and over the fireplace a marble mantel with cupids at the corners. Above the mantel there was a large oil portrait and above the portrait two bullet-torn or moth-eaten cavalry pennants crossed in a glass frame.

Fans of Raymond Chandler will recognize the opening of *The Big Sleep*. Marlowe has been introducing us to the Sternwood family and some of its four million dollars; standing alongside him at the door of the Sternwood mansion we have been presented with an array of family possessions. We don't know *that* much about the family, but this long descriptive passage gives us a good idea what to expect.

The literary technique is familiar. People, we understand, may be revealed by their possessions. The skill of the novelist presupposes complex patterns of recognition and identification deeply embedded in our social life, patterns fostered and sustained by advertisers and consumers alike. The academic unravelling of these modes of presentation may be left to psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and psychiatrists, but we all claim the status of the gifted amateur. After all, we are the counters in these familiar games.

In this paper I want to concentrate on the philosophical aspects of those relations between people and things which we designate as property relations. My concern is not primarily definition or classification. The property-holder or owner may be characterized as the bearer of some or all of a complex set of legal and moral rights, duties, liberties, liabilities, powers and immunities concerning possession, use and benefit.[1] My starting point will be more historical. My chief purpose is to unravel and resuscitate the theory of Hegel, but I shall begin with a difficulty arising in the work of John Locke.

I

Locke's problem is this. If, as Scripture tells us, the whole earth has been given to mankind in common, 'it seems to some a very great difficulty how any one should ever come to have a *Property* in any thing'.[2] Locke resists at the outset any solution that requires the express consent of the Commoner: 'If such a consent as that was necessary, Man had starved, notwithstanding the Plenty God had given him.'[3] The solution he offers is a theory of appropriation according to which the earth was given to man for his support and comfort, and God's provision can secure man's life and convenience without anyone claiming natural private Dominion. God's role in the apportionment of goods is limited to his grant of reason

to mankind, and the use of this faculty will enable man to determine how this Divine provision can be beneficial to any particular man.

The difficulty I mentioned concerns the spelling out of these dictates of reason. The rough answer, of course, is that property is assigned when men mix their labour with the natural world, but the detail of the argument towards this conclusion is both flimsy and controversial. We can outline the steps of the argument as follows:[4]

(1) 'every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself.'
(2) 'The *Labour* of his Body and the *Work* of his hands, we may say, are properly his.'
(3) 'Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*.'

Most commentators claim that Locke's argument achieves its plausibility by stretching the concept of property so that it applies to the relations between a man and his moral status (that is, his being a person). It is in virtue of this moral status that actions may be ascribed to him and hence that his work and his labour can be properly considered his. One's work and labour represents the admixture of one's person to the natural world. Through labour, a quality of the person becomes a quality of that bit of the world on which the labour has been expended.

I have no doubt that the old-fashioned charge against Locke, that he equivocates with the term 'property' in this argument, is correct. Still, since my interest in this paper concerns the ground covered by this equivocation, let me mention two aspects of it which have been emphasized by different commentators and which cry out for amplification and clarification. The first of these readings of Locke[5] emphasizes the idea that 'personality is extended to encompass physical objects', that items appropriated as property are 'infused with' something of the personality of the owner. Hence we are to conclude that the contraction of the core of one's property into the sphere of personality (life, limb and liberty) licenses the expansion of the concept of personality to cover those physical objects which are deemed to be property.

The second reading[6] focuses more sharply on the concept of labour and its place as the point of 'infusion'. The labourer, it is said, fashions something new. The mixing or joining of his labour to the material of his work is a creative activity in the strongest sense. There is no object which persists in altered form through the activity of the labourer. In consequence, what is appropriated can never be what is just there. It must always be such a transformation as is effected in 'the intentional acts of catching, killing, gathering, tilling, planting and cultivating'. It is

concluded that the model of our ascription of an intentional act to a person as *his* action suffices to explain our accordance to him of the objects which result from these actions.

Both these conclusions are debatable, and I wish to argue that Hegel's account of property deepens and, in part, resolves the problems they throw up.

II

Hegel's most sustained treatment of the concept of property is found in the first sub-section of the first part, Abstract Right, of the *Philosophy of Right*. Although I shall use material from other works to supplement and support my exposition of his views, I shall take the *Philosophy of Right* as the central text. So perhaps some description of the style of argument of this work is in order.

Man's understanding of himself, of his place in nature and his relationship with other men has developed through history in a way that can be characterized as the increasing self-knowledge of Spirit. This self-knowledge is explicit in philosophical descriptions of those modes of knowledge and those institutions which are consonant with men's conception of themselves as fully self-conscious beings. Hegel thinks that when he writes, the major distortions and dissonances between man's place in the world and his understanding of that position have been laid bare, and man has achieved, for the first time in history, a condition in which there will be no barriers to man's, i.e. Spirit's, self-understanding. This achievement is embodied in the philosophical description of forms of life which comprise the culture and society to which the philosopher belongs.

Such descriptions form the heart of the *Philosophy of Right*. They are structured as a deduction which is possible because the state to be described is rational. Rationality is explicit in three modes of self-characterization. The agent sees himself successively as a person, as an autonomous moral subject and as a member of a community. The final identification, possible only to the citizen of a rational state, incorporates the first two modes through the institutions of that state. The first part, Abstract Right, which includes the section on property, explains how the structural features of systems which regulate property holdings derive from our conception of ourselves as *persons*, that is individuals who can abstract the contents from particular states of desire and recognize ourselves as possessors of will. Since, in the familiar quote, 'What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational',[7] (in modern terms, perhaps, we discern a reflective equilibrium between our most deeply held judgments and a theory which purports to generate them), we can expect Hegel's views to be clarified by one or other of two strategies. A first strategy

would be to investigate our understanding of standard elements of systems of property relation, showing through examples whether or not, or how far, this understanding presupposes or amplifies the major claim of this section – that 'property is the embodiment of personality' (*PR* §51). A second strategy would be to unravel the theory implicit in this claim so as to show more clearly the cogency of the purported deduction of a rational system of property relations. In what follows I shall employ each of these strategies in turn.

III

A rational system of property-holding will determine conditions under which men may legitimately possess, use and alienate objects. Further it will determine the conditions required for interpersonal transactions (contract) to be possible, and illegitimate invasions to be punishable. If property is an embodiment of personality, modes of taking possession must be understood as expressions of the will of the possessor. Is this how we see them? Hegel characteristically discusses three such modes. Though others may find thirty-three, I shall stick with his classification.

The first way of taking possession of an object is by directly *grasping it physically.* Hegel considers this 'the most complete of these modes, because then I am directly present in this possession, and therefore my will is recognisable in it' (*PR* §55). Before we look at examples a few comments might help to elucidate this. The objects of which I take possession must be considered *res nullius* at this stage of the argument, and grasping effects a transformation in the status of the object from a thing to a possession. Next, consider the 'direct presence' of the will in the object grasped. We can understand this if we take it in the light of some remarks Hegel makes concerning the concept of injury. Elsewhere he argues that 'it is only the will existent in an object that can suffer injury' (*PR* §96). A car isn't injured if I kick it, nor is a rose if I prune it. Kick *my* car, however, and you injure me. Even if you do no damage at all (say you just boot the rubber bumper, bang the roof or flick the aerial), I will regard your action as striking me. That bit of me which is my property has been violated. That is how I see it, and that is how my attacker sees it if his act is one of aggression.

In this case, though, my will is present indirectly. A contrast should be drawn between cases where the will is embodied directly, i.e. in my body (hence I am injured directly when my shin is kicked) and cases where the will is present indirectly, i.e. in an external object. Grasp makes the object a part of the body; whilst in my grasp, the object is physically inseparable. This is the principle 'what I hold, I have', familiar to all children.

Notice, too, Hegel's claim that my will is *recognizable* in the object when I grasp it. One of Hegel's principles is that will, unless its expression is pathological as in 'the Hindu fanaticism of pure contemplation', must have a physical aspect of expression. If I am to determine myself, make something of myself, the self that is operated on must be recognizable by me in just the same way that it is recognized by others. If, therefore, we recognize the grasping of an object as taking possession, we do so precisely because we identify the will of the property holder in his grasp.

The joining of object to person effected by physical grasp is a limited mode of taking possession. It may be extended by the use of mechanical forces, weapons or tools, as perhaps when I lasso a horse or chain a dog. Also property may be accumulated when objects which are *res nullius* are seen to be joined to, or a part of, objects which are already designated as property, as when minerals are discovered under my land or washed to my beach. If we regard these extensions as wholly implausible, we should consider why. One answer that develops the theory would involve the claim that these connections are entirely contingent and arbitrary, i.e. they cannot be spelled out in terms of the will of the lucky man who finds them (*PR*, Remark to §55).

The second mode of taking possession is the *imposition of form*. The intuitive idea here is that something is mine if I have formed or made it, in the sense that the object is an expression of my will. The point may be made both by contrast and examples. One reason which may be given for saying that an object is the property of the maker is that the maker deserves it in virtue of the pains and inconvenience incurred in his work.[8] This is not Hegel's view. Again the background is that of a man appropriating items that are *res nullius* and doing so, in this case, by creation. We shall examine later the way in which will is expressed in creative activity. For the moment, consider our practice of viewing artifacts as expressive of the maker's personality. Obvious examples are works of art. One of the properties that we appraise in paintings and sculpture, and arguably a central component of all artistic evaluation, is the measure to which the art object displays clearly the intention of the artist. As we scrutinize paintings, especially those which are not of the highest quality, we puzzle about the aim they embody. Where these aims are set out in a catalogue we struggle to trace their expression in the physical object we confront. Some theories of art notwithstanding, we are well used to the idea that a man who makes something out of nothing imposes his will. Hegel argues that if we see things this way we recognize the object as the property of the maker.

The final mode of taking possession is that of *marking* the object. In this case the will is not actual but is represented. 'The meaning of the mark is supposed to be that I have put my will into the thing' (*PR* §58). This is a tricky claim to assess, so let's look first at some examples. I buy

a book, take it home and, with a flourish, write my name on the fly-leaf, or better still, paste in my elegant wood-cut bookplate. What am I up to? Is this merely the literary equivalent of Cash's name tapes sewn on school uniform, or does its design as a device for reminding lazy borrowers that a prompt return would be appreciated emphasize that I claim it in a more substantial fashion than I would were I merely to place it, unmarked, on my shelves? Do I mean it to be regarded as a hostile presence on the desk of the borrower? Does a book, so marked, transmit my indignation to a careless friend?

There are lots of ways of representing our will in objects, and these can be poor utilitarian strategies. We can stick the names 'Stan' and 'Sue' on our windscreen, but this won't keep out thieves. We can put up ornate little fences around the garden, but next door's dog will still leap over to do his dirty business. Central to this practice is our understanding that by so marking objects we display ourselves as proud possessors to ourselves and to others. The act of inscription is more pregnant than the meaning of the name inscribed. We view the person who autographs his possessions as staking and publishing his claim.

Let us gather together the threads of the discussion so far. We are to read Hegel as listing the ways that we take possession of objects, and as interpreting these actions as the embodiment of will in one form or another. One model of embodiment, of course, is the relation between mind and body, but we shouldn't expect a simple account of this relationship which will enable us to plot extensions and chart analogies. At this stage we should look at whatever characteristic activities are agreed to constitute appropriation and understand them as involving the imposition of will and the expression of personality. So far, the task has been interpretative, and intended to amplify the central theme, that property is the embodiment of personality, by appealing to our understanding of familiar practices. If these illustrations have worked, we will acknowledge that one who takes possession by grasping, forming or marking externalizes his will in such a way that it is recognizable by others and by himself.

Although we can speak quite naturally of property as the embodiment of personality and externalization of will, we cannot be sure that such talk, and associated sentiments and beliefs, do not encapsulate error and illusion until we can locate those intutions within an acceptable philosophical account of human agency and will. This is our second strategy – to examine directly those intuitions characteristically adduced in the understanding of property institutions.

After discussing the various modes of taking possession, Hegel proceeds to analyse the 'Use of the Thing'. He writes:

> By being taken into possession, the thing acquires the predicate 'mine' and my will is related to it positively. Within this identity, the thing

> is equally established as something negative and my will in this situation is a particular will, i.e. need, inclination and so forth. . . . The use of the thing is my need being externally realized through the change, destruction, and consumption of the thing.
>
> (*PR* §59)

We can already see a little more clearly what aspect of the will is involved in appropriation. Use manifests the will of the possessor by displaying how the object is fitted into the pattern of his needs, inclinations and desires. My use of an object shows what I wanted to do with it.

We might respond to this development of the theory as follows. Now, we claim, we can understand this talk of embodiment of the will. It reduces to the simple claim that the will of the owner is expressed in his use of the object. But no one ever denied this. His use of the object is an action, and so this will may be interpreted as his intention. Nothing except confusion is added by the thesis that the *object* embodies the will.

The rest of my exposition of Hegel's views may be seen as a sustained reply to this objection. A first point to make is that the objection can only be understood in terms of a simple collection and consumption model of property ownership. It omits entirely the way property is acquired and integrated into the life of a man who recognizes future as well as present desires and organizes his property in line with his conception of his likely and preferred prospects. The resonant phrases of philosophers who emphasize autonomy, a whole discourse concerning plans of life, projects of self-expression, experiments of living and strategies of prudence, may be cashed out in terms of the disposition of an individual's material assets. Imaginative conceptions of our future selves are indistinguishable from fantasy or day-dreams unless they are supported by acquisition, investment or planned savings. Prudence without property is a joke. Anyone who wishes to conduct an inventory of his desires may profitably begin by walking round his own dwelling or looking in his wardrobe.

Let us try to give this reply more philosophical solidity. Hegel distinguishes two elements in the will. It contains, first:

> the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever. This is the unrestricted infinity of absolute abstraction or universality, the pure thought of oneself.
>
> (*PR* §5)

Cartesians will recognize this thought as the content of a *cogito* so radical that it excludes reference to the thinker. The abstraction involved (and

who has ever attained it?) is so absolute that universality is distilled from it. You and I, seekers after truth, are conscious not of your thought and mine but of thought, pure and simple.

The second element of will is will 'as particular, with a determinate object, content, and aim' (*PR* §6) as in 'I do want that doggy in the window.'

Both of these elements or moments of the will are abstractions. Will proper is the unity of these movements. Hegel's language here is hard. He writes of the will:

> It is the *self*-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e. as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e. in its self-identity and universality. It determines itself and yet at the same time binds itself together with itself.
>
> (*PR* §7)

On this account the central feature of human willing is self-determination. The elements of abstraction and universality, determinacy and particularity are united in a process whereby will operates on itself. An example should make this clear. I leave work every day at the same time and walk home along a route that takes me past the Pear Tree Inn, which has just opened for the evening. Several of my friends have similar habits, and I drop in to see them. On odd occasions, they don't turn up, but I have a friend in the barman and am content to relax in his company. Cheerily walking to the pub one evening I wonder whether Fred, a fellow regular, has got the job he wanted, and just as quickly realize I don't really care. What I want is a drink. I then see that I have locked myself into a habit, and I don't like what I have become. I continue going to the pub, but increasingly regard myself with distaste as I notice that I am skipping work so as to leave on time or hanging around so as to avoid going home early. So, in small ways, I begin to break up this routine. If work finishes early I go straight home; if there is still work to do I finish it. Sometimes I have a quick drink and disappear; sometimes I slip into a different pub and sometimes I accept a lift straight home in a friend's car.

We can identify the Hegelian elements of the will at several points in this story. When I achieve an external perspective on my life and identify a habit which makes me squirm, I have clear sense of myself as a desiring creature whose desires could be different. I can abstract from the desires I acknowledge. I see that there are things which I could do which will make the desire for a drink less pressing.

Central to my strategy for making something different of myself, and a consequence of my ability to step outside myself and appraise myself

indifferently, is my realization that desire itself can be manipulated. Desires which are strong in practice are eliminable in thought, and desires eliminated in thought may be mastered in practice.

When we assign a structure of this sort to the will, viewing our desires as material to be regulated and ordered in line with desires of a higher order still (for example the desire not to be the kind of person we see ourselves being or becoming), we reach a clearer understanding of the slippery concept of self-determination (*PR* Addition to §7).[9]

> The will is not something complete and universal prior to its determining itself and prior to its superseding and idealizing this determination. The will is not a will until it is this self-mediating activity, this return into itself.
>
> (*PR*, Remark to §7)

How does this account of the activity of the will connect with Hegel's account of property? The first three chapters of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* contain a sustained argument towards the conclusion that full self-knowledge cannot be attained by beings whose philosophical labours are directed towards the elucidation of a theory of knowledge. The lesson taken from the failure of traditional epistemology to distinguish structural features of the perceiving consciousness from objective properties of objects in the external world is that we can only understand what it is for us to have knowledge when we understand ourselves. Self-knowledge begins with a conception of ourselves as 'animal spirits'. We locate ourselves first of all as participants in a flux of creation, degeneration and death, self-replenishing but mortal mediums of production and consumption. At this animal level we understand ourselves primarily not as contemplative or reflective beings but as creatures moved by desire.

Man absorbed in reflection cannot separate himself in thought from the objects of his contemplation. A desiring creature is forced to do so. He identifies objects in their otherness and, being alive, is driven to overcome that otherness in the consummation of his desire. His seeing objects as the source of his continued existence enables him to achieve a rudimentary sense of himself as other than the objects of his desire. In sequence, man sees himself as a locus of desire, as an agent in search of satisfaction and finally as consumer or destroyer of the source of his enhanced self-consciousness. Man's condition as a desiring creature yields a view of himself that is flickering and transient. It is achieved only in the presence of objects of desire, and is itself consumed in consummation.

The discussion of desire in the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia* and the central position of desire in the analysis of will in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* together determine an important aspect of our understanding of action. Man has an animal nature which his desires

articulate. He acts within very sharp causal constraints. We know there are some things he will want, whatever else he wants. This, the thinnest of all theories of the good, defines a set of causal goods as physically and perhaps psychologically necessary for life to continue. These goods are fellow occupiers of natural space, and life for all beasts requires some access to them. It is a (common) mistake amongst readers of Hegel to let our animal nature slip out of the picture altogether, to forget that this nature provides, so to say, the raw material of self-determination. We have a range of desires, and a vast range of objects can satisfy them in one way or another. The scope and generality of these desires creates the possibility of free action (cf. *PR* §12). That portion of our action which requires material objects as means or ends necessitates the possibility of men making claims to such objects.

The next step in the development of self-consciousness requires the transcendence of animal desire. The object of desire must have the status of permanent 'Other' if man's conception of himself is to be stable and substantial. In the *Phenomenology* the requirement that man should recognize himself will be met when what he desires is precisely that recognition which only another consciousness can afford. I become self-conscious, see myself as a conscious being, only when I recognize another as conscious and only when that other consciousness recognizes me.

This ideal is first canvassed in paragraphs 182–4 of the *Phenomenology*. Hegel writes:

> this movement of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this way been represented as the action of *one* self-consciousness, but this action of the one has itself the double significance of being both its own action and the action of the other as well. For the other is equally independent and self-contained, and there is nothing in it of which it is not itself the origin. The first does not have the object before it merely as it exists primarily for desire, but as something that has an independent existence of its own, which, therefore, it cannot utilize for its own purposes, if that object does not of its own accord do what the first does to it . . . Each sees the other do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. . . . They *recognise* themselves as mutually recognising one another.

In more accessible language, the point may be expressed as follows. Man, to be properly self-conscious, must apply to himself concepts which serve to differentiate man from the rest of natural creation. These concepts cannot be acquired through solitary contemplation, but emerge as men in history relate themselves to other men; they may be discerned as the

structural features of forms of social life, revealed in the course of a sort of pathology of history. At the end-point, men may be said to recognize themselves when they describe themselves in terms of concepts which they see as instantiated equally by other men. These other men likewise will describe themselves in these same terms, applying them equally to others. We shall see ourselves as others see us, seeing others as we see ourselves.

What are these concepts which frame self-understanding? At the level of objective Spirit they comprise the categories of self-ascription investigated in the *Philosophy of Right*, the categories of person, autonomous moral subject and member of an ethical community, a rational state with family, civil and political relations. For us the crucial category is that of person. The imperative of right, 'Be a person and respect others as persons' (*PR* §36), enjoins us to claim property rights and respect the property rights of others, to appropriate, hence identify ourselves through the medium of our property and to accord others equivalent status as they express and recognize themselves in their property. This conclusion is expressed neatly in the *Encyclopaedia*:

> The thing is the *mean* by which the extremes (of Self and Other) meet in one. These extremes are the persons who, in the knowledge of their identity as free, are simultaneously mutually independent. For them, my will has its *definite recognizable existence* in the thing, by the immediate bodily act of taking possession, or by the formation of the thing or, it may be, by mere designation of it.[10]

Property is thus an essential element of self-consciousness. To repeat, through it my will has its definite *recognizable existence.*

We can summarize as follows these connections between property, personality and action. As beast, man desires 'the bare necessities', and possessions can satisfy those needs. Property serves a related but greater purpose. Freedom would be impossible were men not able to accumulate and dispose of the assets required to support the conception of the good life which they adopt. As soon as this conception goes beyond a conception of the self as atomistic consumer, men will appropriate durable items which can be employed regularly in the satisfaction of socially ordered, recurrent desires. Property is a social relation akin to language in interesting ways; a medium of social transparency, it permits both self-expression and public intelligibility, both self-identification and mutual recognition. Like language, a consciousness which determines itself cannot be a private object of introspection.

We emphasized earlier that the will is free when it operates upon itself, by ordering its desires. In a community of persons this ordering will take two forms. Individuals will appropriate, use and dispose of their property

in pursuit of their considered plans and ambitions, but this exercise of self-expression will be undertaken in full recognition of the claims of others to respect. Ordering will take place here at a second, higher level as persons work out a system of rules governing the exact scope of appropriation, use and alienation, and the methods and materials of acceptable exchange. Regarding themselves as persons they will also seek (but be unable to find) the means of determining a just measure of punishment as retribution for crime.

In a primitive way, therefore, men will accept rules governing their status and relations as property holders as expressions of their (now ordered) wills. There is no mystery here. Hegel himself interprets Hobbes as arguing in the same way.[11] The citizen is the author of laws of the Sovereign. Part of the reason why he is obliged to obey them is that the laws reflect the citizen's own ordered preferences, an ordering each citizen would accept were he, in a thought-experiment, to place himself in a State of Nature. In the natural state Everyman would rapidly deduce that his most important desires are to preserve his life and live commodiously. When the laws of nature are transformed into the laws of the Sovereign, the will of the citizen achieves a positive, determinate expression.

V

The final puzzle thrown up by Locke concerns labour, and this is a suitable topic on which to close my exposition, since this aspect of Hegel's views was taken up by his successors, notably by Marx. In the *Phenomenology* we first encounter labour in the person of the slave in the master–slave dialectic. The master, we recall, fails in his design to become an independent consciousness. He distances himself from nature by forcing the slave to cater for his needs, but *mutual* recognition is impossible since the slave, sunk in nature, has not been accorded the status necessary for the master to recognize himself. So the master recognizes only his own dependence. 'The *truth* of the independent consciousness is, accordingly, the servile consciousness of the bondsman.'[12] Why is this?

The essential features of the consciousness of the slave are these. At the moment of the master's victory in the struggle the slave experienced his own essential nature, seeing himself, in defeat, as a pure, negative consciousness. 'This consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations.'[13] His mind has been concentrated wonderfully; his

consciousness stripped of all desire, vacant and bewildered, he confronts himself as a naked consciousness, a someone who is nothing.

Next, the slave is put to service and provides for the master's consumption. But whereas the master remains a creature of desire, the slave works on the natural world. 'Work,' Hegel writes, 'is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off . . . (it) forms and shapes the thing . . . the formative *activity* is at the same time the individuality or pure being-for-self of consciousness which now, in the work outside of it, acquires an element of permanence. It is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being (of the object) its *own* independence.'[14] (Marx, of course, would substitute 'alienation' for 'independence' here.)

The essential contrast between work and consumption is that work involves discipline. Fear is the source of service and obedience. The worker's desires are ordered for him; hence, paradoxically he can see himself as an ordered will in a way that is impossible for his master, the consumer. Discipline, service, obedience, these are all terms which invoke the higher ordering of desires which are essential to the development of will, and this ordering is embodied in the products of the labour of the slave.

The model of labour suggested here is exemplified more clearly by the master-chef than by the assembly-line worker. It involves planning and preparation, the assembling of materials and the formulation of a strategy for undertaking a succession of tasks in correct sequence. Finally it involves patience, persistence and resolution in sticking to the plan. All of these qualities can be recognized in the work of the craftsman, which is the epitome of 'desire held in check, fleetingness staved off'.

This for Hegel is the importance of labour. Later in the *Phenomenology* he charts the dishonesties and deceptions which accompany the identification of the individual, as against the social self, in the product of work.[15] In the *Philosophy of Right* he emphasizes the social contribution which individuals, who seek their own satisfaction, are forced to make and recognize as soon as division of labour becomes necessary for the gratification of ever more sophisticated needs and wants.[16] But throughout, labour is the imposition of an ordered will on the external world, and our creations display it.

VI

Let me conclude with a few remarks on the value of Hegel's account as I have reconstructed it. Two questions stand out, and Hegel would have been impatient with both of them as indicative of minds which wilfully remain at the level of Understanding. The first, obviously, is 'How far

can this account be taken as a justification of property?' The second, equally pressing, casts an eye over the wide range of present and historical forms of property relations and asks whether or not the theory helps us establish which of these provide an appropriate framework for self-determination as this has been understood.

I shall take the second question first, for those who ask it have often, like the sneaky parliamentarian, a most powerful supplementary at hand. They quickly throw in the thought that the 'actual' which is rationalized by Hegel is the amalgam of unacceptable relations which constitutes capitalist commodity production. This last charge is not entirely wide of the mark.[17] In important respects the model owner in the account of property relations given in the section on Abstract Right looks very much like the possessive individualist familiar from recent accounts of classical liberal theory.[18] This impression is confirmed by Hegel's description of economic man working with like-minded others to pursue their own interests in Civil Society.

Nowadays, it is widely recognized that Hegel's portrayal of emergent capitalism contained strong critical elements. Very early in his career, his vision of economic science as reason shining through a mass of accidents was complemented by an awareness that the prevalent system of commodity-production and exchange was accompanied by severe structural defects. Labour is reduced to mindless unrewarding toil, fantastic and wasteful inequalities develop, the system itself slips out of gear, markets collapse and masses are reduced to poverty.[19] This sets up one of the tasks of the state, that of restoring the mechanism which contingencies have weakened, and this is to be achieved by redistributive taxation, by civil service supervision of corporate management and by a vigorous colonial policy.[20]

It is clear enough that the property relations Hegel has in mind are those of a modified welfare capitalism. To this extent, those who see it as a charge against Hegel that he defends property relations which are inherently immoral or demeaning, and who claim that the instruments for mollification are too weak to effect the changes which Hegel's radical critique demands, are surely correct in their identification of his position.

I will not discuss now whether these criticisms are fair. The question in hand concerns the possibility of developing Hegel's theory of using his material on self-determination and personality to come to a view on which sorts of property relation are legitimate. In this context I would like to look again at some of Hegel's remarks concerning private property, since these suggest that happy acceptance of classical capitalism need not be the end of the story.

In *PR* §46 he writes as follows:

> Since my will as the will of a person, and so a single will, becomes

> objective to me in property, property acquires the character of private property; and common property of such a nature that it may be owned by separate persons acquires the character of an inherently dissoluble partnership in which the retention of any share is explicitly a matter of my arbitrary preference.

His intention here is to show that private property (*Privateigenthum*) through its connection with 'a single will' is rational, whereas common property (*Gemeineigenthum*) is not. The personal pronouns in this passage are deceptive, since it is clear from the remarks Hegel attached to his manuscript[21] and from the student lecture notes which have been published[22] that the important characteristic of private property is its relation to a 'single exclusive will' (see also Remark to §62). Some odd examples follow. Hegel speaks of 'moral' or 'artificial' persons, families, local communities or municipalities (*Gemeinde*), churches and monasteries, all as having *Privateigenthum* rather than *Gemeineigenthum*. Later on in the section on the Family we find that 'the family, as person, has its real external existence in property' (*PR* §169, 170–2). In the chapter on the state, Hegel insists that civil servants should help manage the *Privateigenthum* of commercial, professional and municipal corporations (*PR* §288).

This list of social units exhibiting 'single wills' (and a modern list would be just as long) suggests a related approach to the legitimation of specific forms of property-holding, use and exchange. My proposal, rough and ready, is of this form. Man can identify with overlapping selves of greater and lesser scope, seeing himself as isolated individual, as member of a family, a working community, or a religious congregation, as citizen of a state, some, perhaps all, of these together. Political evangelists, ecologists and mystics remind us that wider and deeper affinities may be recognized. Property is integral to the purposes served by these and other self-defining wills, but Hegel's point is deeper, calling attention to the role of property in the externalization of will which self-determination requires. Great churches are an example of this. They attest more than the need to accommodate large numbers of worshippers; they are more than tributes to or evocations of the God whom the builders worship. They witness and sustain the strength and loyalty of the congregation, and the power of ecclesiastical authority.

There is more interest now in means of production than places of worship. In this context, the giant shadow which lies over any discussion of Hegel's theory of property is that of Marx, who appropriated so much of it. Marx insists that *all* private property is estrangement. In his view, structures of crude communism in which there is an equality of private property, or Proudhonist celebrations of the 'idiocy of crafts', still blind men to their social being. Alienation will be overcome only when men

recognize their social being in social objects of socialist production, when what is objectified is not particular and individual, but social and universal being. The examination of consciousness of social being, and of the forms of property relations which constitute its expression, makes up the itinerary of socialist philosophy.

My conviction is that such a philosophy will be successful only if it stays close to its Hegelian sources, taking as primary those modes of social consciousness which men recognize as constitutive of their sense of self. So, for example, methods of production which frustrate the development of what could be a community of the workplace, which distort and divide the forms of consciousness required for commodity production to be tolerable to those engaged in it, may be considered unacceptable.

That is a very draughty sketch of an answer to the second question posed above. The first question, 'How far does Hegel's theory constitute a justification of property?', will receive an even less satisfactory reply. Hegel has tied our understanding of property to our conceptions of self, will, personality and action. I see no alternative to this direction of inquiry. The priority of understanding over evaluation in the phenomenological method must be retained. Only if philosophers have done their job well and better explained the world, can we hope for change more substantial than the pursuit of the trendy. So the first questions to be addressed in a theory of property should be Hegel's: what features of our lives enable us to recognize ourselves as free? How do we relate ourselves, in our actions, to that natural world of which we are a part?

What more justification do we require if we accept Hegel's line, that men must have property to be, and see themselves as, free agents? This employs a degree of self-understanding that we seek when we appraise ourselves and others, our and their communities. This is not to say that such appraisals are always correct or just; we are not all so astute as Philip Marlowe.

Notes

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1 See A. M. Honoré, 'Ownership', *Oxford Essays in Jurisprudence*, ed. A. C. Guest (Oxford, 1961), pp. 107–47 and the discussion in L. C. Becker, *Property Rights* (London, 1977), pp. 7–23.

2 John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 1963), §25.

3 ibid., §28.

4 ibid., §27.

5 K. Olivecrona, 'Appropriation in the State of Nature: Locke on the Origin of Property', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXXV (1974), pp. 211–30, p. 223.

Locke writes 'The Fruit or Venison, which nourishes the wild *Indian*, who . . . knows no Inclosure, and is still a Tenant in Common, must be his, and so his, i.e. a part of him, that another can no longer have any right to it, before it can do him any good for the support of his life' (Locke, *Second Treatise* §26). Olivecrona reads this passage as a 'most unequivocal expression of the idea that personality is extended to encompass physical objects'. This is a mistake. Locke is making a simpler point, saying, not that personality is extended, but that physical objects are (literally) incorporated before they can nourish the owner. We should not read too much Hegel into Locke's account of property.

6 James Tully, *A Discourse on Property* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 104–24, quoted p. 121.

7 *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1952), p. 10 (hereafter abbreviated to *PR*).

8 Becker attributes this line of reasoning to Locke. See *Property Rights*, pp. 35, 48–55. Cf. Locke, *Second Treatise* §34.

9 Recently. H. Frankfurt has distinguished first- and second-order desires in working out a similar project; William Alston distinguishes lower- and higher-level motiviation in order to explain how the agent's conception of the self enters explanation of action; and Charles Taylor contrasts first-order desires with two kinds of second-order desires (strong and weak evaluations of desire) in seeking an account of the essential properties of human agency. See. H. Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person', *Journal of Philosophy*, LXVII No. 1 (Jan. 1971), pp. 5–20; William P. Alston, 'Self-Intervention and the Structure of Motivation', Charles Taylor, 'What is Human Agency?', both in *The Self*, ed. T. Mischel (Oxford, 1977) pp. 65–103 and pp. 103–35. See also R. Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 352–62 for a related account of 'Self-choosing'.

10 *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Part Three of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 1830) (Oxford, 1971) §491 p. 244.

11 *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, ed. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London, 1896), Vol. 3, pp. 315–19.

12 *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* §193 p. 117.

13 ibid., §194 p. 117.

14 ibid., §195 p. 118.

15 ibid., §§394–418 pp. 236–52.

16 *PR*, Third Part, sub-section Two, 'Civil Society', note especially §187: 'Individuals can attain their ends only in so far as they themselves determine their knowing, willing and acting in a universal way and make themselves links in this chain of social connexions.'

17 Oddly enough, the form of property relation which Marx singled out for detailed and ferocious criticism was the particular variety of primogeniture which Hegel believed the state should recognize as suitable for landed estates. ibid., §§304–7 and Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, ed. Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 94–111.

18 Compare the description of rational property relations in the sub-sections on Property and Contract with the model of possessive individualism advanced by C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 51–61.

19 *PR* §§185, 200, 240–6. For commentaries, see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (London, 1955) pp. 56–61, 73–82, 204–13. George Lukács, *The Young Hegel* (London, 1975) pp. 319–98. Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 87–109.

20 *PR* §§241–2, 245, 246–8, 287–8, 299. For further references, see Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, pp. 99–108.

21 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818–31*, ed. K.-H. Ilting (Stuttgart, 1973), Vol. 2, ZU §46 pp. 217–18.

22 ibid., Vol. 3 pp. 211–13, Vol. 4 pp. 187–94 and *PR.*, Remark to §62.

Hegel's critique of liberal theories of rights*

Peter G. Stillman

In 'Abstract Right', the first part of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel develops the rights of the person to life, liberty, and property; his right to self-defence; and his right to the wide-ranging exercise of his arbitrary freedom or free self-determination. Furthermore, in abstract rights Hegel finds the bases for what is made concrete in civil society: a capitalistic economic order ('the system of needs') and a liberal administration of justice – public, egalitarian and characterized by due process. In 'Abstract Right' – and in 'Civil Society', where the concrete manifestations of abstract rights are discussed – Hegel holds, in their fullness, the central liberal positions.[1]

THE CRITIQUE OF THE CONTENT OF RIGHTS

But 'Abstract Right' contains, usually implicitly, a critique of much liberal theory. Hegel's critique falls into two distinct categories. One major category of Hegel's critique has to do with the content of abstract rights or, as much liberal theory calls them, natural rights. Unlike most liberals, Hegel does not treat the state immediately after the discussion of the rights of man; rather, he takes a long route – through morality, the family and civil society – before he comes to the state.

Both Hegel and Locke, for instance, explain the rights of men, and then turn to a consideration of punishment. Hegel next examines morality,[2] and then the family[3] and civil society,[4] before he finally gets to the state.[5] Locke, on the other hand, proceeds quickly to a discussion of the state.[6] Thus, Locke jumps from the natural man with his arbitrary will to the civil state which makes laws but otherwise lets man's arbitrary will have full play.[7] In other words, Locke generally assumes (or ignores) all those institutions and ways by which the natural man (or the natural

child) becomes a civilized man capable of functioning well in the civil society of the *Second Treatise*.[8] But Hegel is surely correct in his argument that men plucked from the state of nature would not be able to maintain or govern a Lockian state.[9] In *On Liberty*, usually considered the classic defence of arbitrary freedom or individual freedom from social and political control, Mill is explicit in assuming – and then ignoring – the institutions and attitudes which make men civilized. *On Liberty* simply applies to the few advanced European countries where civilization can be assumed; other countries are lucky if they are ruled by a Charlemagne or the East Indian Company.[10]

Hegel, on the other hand, spends much – it might be said, all – of the *Philosophy of Right* dealing not only with the political order and arbitrary freedom, but also with those various attitudes (like morality) and those various institutions (like the family and the pluralistic group[11]) by which men become fully developed men who have freedom, culture and individuality, men who can give reasoned consent to a reasonable political order, men who are mature enough to be able to exercise their freedom. At the level of formal rights, then, for Hegel there is implicitly a serious defect, of narrowness; abstract rights alone cannot form the basis for the state; more is needed, and the sections between 'Abstract Right' and the 'State' describe those attitudes and institutions not explictly present in abstract rights.

For Hegel, a basic inadequacy of abstract rights, and the reason for their narrowness, is to be found in the definition of the person. A theory of rights does not deal with man; it deals with a mere abstraction from man: the person, who is defined essentially in terms of his arbitrary free will and thus his capacity for rights.[12] Consequently, for the person, morality is irrelevant; persons may do whatever they have a right to do, regardless of morality. Indeed, not only morality, but also a whole range of human concerns – about social relations, human feelings,[13] culture, welfare and individual development – are excluded from rights. Therefore, the person exercising his rights is not an especially attractive human, at least for Hegel:

> To have no interest except in one's formal right may be pure obstinacy, often a fitting accompaniment of a cold heart and restricted sympathies. It is uncultured people who insist most on their rights, while noble minds look on other aspects of the thing.[14]

Similarly, for Hegel the contractual relation is not the only legitimate human relation; yet the person, as the subject of rights, can only exercise his rights and can only relate to others by contract.[15] Hegel insists that neither marriage nor the state can be a contract, in part because of the strict definition of contract: its object must be 'a single external thing'.[16]

Thus, for Hegel marriage and the state are areas of life in which contract and its concomitants – like the *Versachlichung* (literally translated, 'thing-ification') of human relations[17] and the political theory of possessive individualism[18] – do not prevail, where feeling and community may have scope, and where human, not merely personal, characteristics exist.[19]

The person is but an abstract and narrow man; and the attenuation carries over into many areas. For instance, persons are not individuals with distinctive individual traits which set them apart from each other and give them individual value; persons are not individuated. One person differs from another simply because of external differences: colour of hair, height, birthplace, impressions on his *tabula rasa* mind – in short, differences over which the person has no control and which are basically the products of nature or chance.[20] Consequently, the resultant differentiation among persons is one of eccentricity[21] and idiosyncrasy rather than of substance. For fully developed men in society, there are substantial differentiations – of class and occupation, for instance. While persons can only be eccentrics, men in society are individuals.

Further, even in regard to the free will, that important area which the person shares with the man, the person is limited. For the person is, in an important sense, not free, even though he has formal rights and formal freedom. He has only an 'arbitrary will'; it wills whatever it wants, but its contents, from which it chooses, are given.

> If you stop at the consideration that, having an arbitrary will, a man can will this or that, then of course his freedom consists in that ability. But if you keep firmly in view that the content of his willing is a given one, then he is determined thereby and in that respect at all events is free no longer.[22]

The arbitrary will is able to choose among impulses, desires, passions and the like; but the passions or impulses among which it chooses are a content over which it has no control. The Hegelian arbitrary will is thus quite similar to freedom as conceptualized by many liberals, like Locke and Hobbes. For them,[23] freedom and determination are compatible; as long as the individual has self-determination, it does not matter that the content of his choice is given. Locke agrees with Hobbes' reasoning that

> *liberty* and *necessity* are consistent . . . in the actions which men voluntarily do: which, because they proceed from their will, proceed from *liberty*; and yet, because every act of man's will, and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continual chain, whose first link is the hand of God the first of all causes, proceed from *necessity*.[24]

Locke also concurs in Hobbes' further argument that

> fear and liberty are consistent; as when a man throweth his goods into the sea for *fear* the ship should sink, he doth it nevertheless very willingly, and may refuse to do it if he will: it is therefore the action of one that was *free*.[25]

For Hegel, the self-determination of the arbitrary will is an essential element of freedom; but this freedom of the person is only one element in the full definition of freedom. Another element, for instance, is control over the contents of the choice, both in the sense that the contents be at least in part determined by the individual and not by an alien causal chain and in the sense that at least one of the choices be an alternative that is desirable and rational under any circumstances. (Thus, while Hobbes and other liberals see liberty as consistent with both fear and a restricted choice, Hegel regards a choice among unappealing alternatives as only limited freedom.[26] It is not true freedom, Hegel thinks, for a traveller to have to choose between losing his goods and death by water, for a subject to have to choose between living under an oppressive tyranny and a flight that would lose him his family and property, or for Hobbes to be given the choice, in England during the Civil War, only of fighting for the Roundheads or fighting for the Cavaliers – and not allowed the alternatives of flight or peace suitable for a man 'born twins' with fear[27] and desirous of civil order.) The person of abstract rights, like the man of natural rights, has freedom in the sense of the arbitrary will or of self-determination; but the content of his choice is given, and thus in significant ways he is not free.

Like the will's freedom, political freedom is defined as severely limited by those theorists who proceed from natural rights directly to the state. When the state is built solely on formal rights and natural or abstract men, political obligation is based on a consent, given long ago or sometimes given only tacitly.[28] And obedience to specific laws is based, not on the validity or the rightness of the law, but on prudential considerations of the potential penalties for disobedience.[29] On the other hand, where the laws do not reach, the citizen can do anything, and can follow his natural impulses and arbitrary will wherever they lead him.[30] In the state based on the formal rights of natural or abstract men, who exercise tacit consent, prudential obedience and full arbitrary freedom outside the law, the citizen has little scope for moral decisions and for questions of rightness, and little area in which he must or can develop or educate himself; the education that does occur is either education that makes the citizen more 'Industrious and Rational', i.e. more eager to work and better able to calculate, than he was, or education that is peripheral to life's central concerns.[31] In general, poltical freedom – in the sense of making respons-

ible choices and of having an environment in which the citizen must or will wish to improve and educate himself – is simply narrow in scope.[32]

Even in theory, poltical freedom is thus limited and meagre in states built on the abstract or natural man and his rights. In historical practice, however, political conditions based on the arbitrary or self-determining will of abstractly equal persons can produce terrifying results, as was demonstrated by the French Revolution, which aimed at full liberty and equality but produced the Reign of Terror. For arbitary freedom in political practice is the desire to reduce all limitations on itself to nought, to be fully self-determining.[33] In society, unlimited self-determination faces institutions and social differentiations that provide frameworks and modes for choice. But absolute freedom feels such guides as limits; it desires and acts to eliminate them; and the eventual result of its action is 'the destruction of the whole subsisting social order':[34]

> In this absolute freedom all social ranks or classes, which are the component spiritual factors into which the whole is differentiated, are effaced and annulled; the individual consciousness that belonged to any such group and exercised its will and found its fulfillment there, has removed the barriers confining it.[35]

With the attempt to realize absolute freedom comes the terror of destruction of the social order.

The demand for absolute freedom and the social destruction accompanying its attempted actualization are concurrent with the demand for absolute equality. Absolute equality is as ferocious as absolute freedom; from the removing of all social barriers and the attempted establishing of absolute equality follows 'the elimination of individuals who are objects of suspicion to any social order, and the annihilation of any organization which tries to rise again from the ruins'.[36] Absolute equality assumes that equality is defined as complete sameness and complete undifferentiation; to absolute equality, any difference, any quirk, any distinction implies inequality and must be eliminated. Since any organization or institution implies difference and distinction, no institutions – not even government – are permitted by absolute equality.[37] Everyone must be the same and have the same will: this dictum of absolute equality the government tries to enforce, by executing those who are different, even if they are different only because someone suspects them of difference; similarly the people tries to enforce the dictum against the government, deposing it when it seems to be setting itself up as different in status or in policy from the people, and thus the people rapidly overturns kings, constitutions and parties.

The result of absolute freedom and equality, for Hegel, is simply negation; fully developed negative freedom 'cannot arrive at a positive

accomplishment of anything . . . either in the shape of laws and universal regulations of conscious freedom, or of deeds and works of active freedom'.[38] Any institution that develops to guide individuals, any government that tries to make any particular policy, any distinctions based on merit or worth: all are precluded by absolute freedom and equality. Whenever such differentiation is developed, absolute freedom desires it destroyed. Consequently, 'universal freedom can thus produce neither a positive achievement nor a deed; there is left for it only negative action; it is merely the rage and fury of destruction'.[39]

Even without the extreme (but logically derivative) absolute freedom and terror, abstract or natural rights as the bases of a political state are, for Hegel, abstract and narrow. The person, that abstraction from man, is only a narrow – and amoral, unfeeling and static – portion of man; he is not an individual, though he may be an eccentric; he has the arbitrary freedom of self-determination without control over the content of his choices; and his political freedom is both limited and limiting. A political order based on the abstract or natural rights of man is thus based on only a restricted portion of man; a political theory based only on abstract or natural man thus leaves unconsidered and indeed places beyond consideration questions of human morality, affective human relations, human culture and cultivation, and the development of freedom. In short, a world populated solely by abstract or natural persons with abstract or natural rights is a limited, inhuman and inhumane world.

Because of the basic inhumanity of a world populated by abstract persons, Hegel's logic drives the *Philosophy of Right* to consider more aspects of man than solely 'personhood'. The limited world of persons or natural men is, with Hegel, not the final word, but rather is superseded until Hegel's political philosophy deals with men and individuals, with morality and education and culture, and with freedom in its full sense and the social institutions that produce and maintain it.

THE CRITIQUE OF THE LIBERAL FORMULATION OF RIGHTS

The other major category of Hegel's critique centres on the crucial theoretical errors inherent in the concept of natural rights.[40] The first crucial error of the natural rights theories is that men are led almost inevitably to social contracts, for the natural man's only legitimate interpersonal political relation is contract, and thus the only way that natural men can relate, to form families and civil society, is to contract. None the less, it is probable that some liberal contract theorists were not entirely pleased with the implications of their contract theories.[41] Locke, for instance, clearly tries to hedge both the marriage and social contract with non-contractual limits so that the full implications of contract would not be

developed. Thus, while asserting a popular right to revolution whenever the government does not act as it was bound by the social contract, Locke emphasizes the 'slowness and aversion in the People to quit their old Constitutions'[42] and the people's willingness to tolerate '*great mistakes* in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient Laws, and all the *slips* of humane frailty . . . without mutiny or murmur'.[43] He also sees his doctrine as, in practice, '*the best fence against Rebellion*'.[44] Similarly, marriage is a contract which, at the same time, 'draws with it mutual Support, and Assistance, and a Common Interest too, as necessary . . . to . . . Care, and Affection [and] . . . to their common Offspring'.[45] Locke is frequently regarded as 'judicious' in doctrine and phrasing; Hegel, on the other hand, rather than adopt the Lockian hedging, is simply clear: marriage and the state are not in essence contracts.[46]

The second crucial theoretical error is to see natural or autonomous man as giving up his right to self-defence (or to punish) to the state in return for the benefits of society.[47] For, Hegel argues, at the level of the pre-political, where there are no positive laws or magistrates, the annulment of crime takes the form of revenge, not punishment.[48] Thus, the abstract right (and the natural right) to coerce is always revenge,[49] and individuals in a pre-political condition have the right to revenge, not the right to punish. Clearly, then, it is a misconception to argue that men in the state of nature have a right to punish which they can transfer to the sovereign by compact. They cannot give up the right to punish, because they do not possess it; all they can give up is the right to revenge. Therefore, the liberal contract state gains, not the right to punish, but the right to revenge. As Hegel points out, however, no act of revenge is justified, because the agent is interested, arbitrary and lacking in authority, and because any act of revenge can start an infinite chain of revenge.[50] Therefore, the liberal state has the right to revenge, a right which it ought not exercise in any specific case and a right which, if exercised, may well start a cycle of revenge and alienate some of the state's citizens for life or, indeed, for generations.[51] For Hegel, therefore, the assertion that the state obtains from its citizens the right to punish is incorrect; all that the state can obtain from natural (or abstract) man by compact is their right of revenge to annul crime in an undisinterested way to which the criminal rarely consents. To use the social contract, or the alienation of the right to punish, as the basis for the state is to commit a theoretical error.[52]

It might be noted that one possible liberal rejoinder would be to argue that the right of revenge of private individuals, when it is given to and accepted by the state, becomes the right of punishment. But this argument contains within itself an interesting presupposition that actually runs counter to the liberal position. For if the state, by accepting rights from individuals, can transform or even redefine the individuals' rights – which

are the bases and origin of the state – then the state must have some existence independent of the rights granted it; that is the state must have some basis on which or from which it is able to transform or redefine rights. This basis cannot be obtained from the contracting or consenting individuals, because the ability to transform revenge to punishment is not an ability of the individual; he cannot give to the state something he does not have himself. Consequently, since the basis from which the state redefines revenge to be punishment derives not from individuals, it must rest in the state, and therefore the state does have some existence and content independent of those individuals from whose alienated rights alone the state is supposedly composed. A liberal rejoinder, then, can end up showing what it does not want to prove: that the origin and basis of the state is not solely derived from its citizens.

The final crucial theoretical error inherent in theories of natural rights is the conclusion that the state must limit man's natural freedom and autonomy. This error stems not only from the state of nature hypothesis. It also derives from the tendency of modern and liberal political philosophers to begin political reflection with a consideration of the 'I' or 'Of Man', as have moderns from Descartes and Hobbes,[53] and to develop this 'I' or 'man' to his full concreteness, humanity and social behaviour before a discussion of society, so that, for instance, the Hobbesian or the Lockian 'man' has the same characteristics within civil society as outside it, in the state of nature as in the civil state. One result is, of course, that this completely civilized and human man, developed in a logical abstraction from society, must necessarily be limited in his rights as soon as he is put in a social context.

At best, this usual liberal point of view is slightly depressing: all men's rights and liberties must be limited. At worst, it is dangerous: if liberties must be limited for security or utility, the scope of limitation may be unlimited, as, for instance, in a 'closed commercial state', or in extreme forms of pragmatism.[54] And, on the surface, it is paradoxical: for men join states in order to protect their life, liberty and property, and yet immediately upon joining find their property and liberty limited and – in times of war or in case of crime – their life endangered.

Hegel has a threefold answer to the problem that society must limit the rights of autonomous man. In the first place, the 'I' or 'man' that forms the first determination of modern and liberal political philosophy is not and cannot be a fully developed human being. If he is abstracted from civil society, those characteristics of his which are social must be omitted, and indeed any characteristics which man outside of society would have must be added. It is an invalid logical sleight of hand which abstracts a fully socialized man from society and proclaims him therefore an autonomous man whose characteristics are the opening determination of a political theory. Before Hegel, Rousseau recognized the logical

problems of the pre-political autonomous man;[55] Rousseau adopts a hypothetical historical approach to try to eliminate the problem.[56] Seeing the same problem, Hegel adopts the usual liberal approach of developing the rights of men in a pre-political state. Hegel's pre-political state is, however, not a Rousseauian natural state prior in time, but an abstract state which is prior only in terms of logic. In Hegel's pre-political state, as in that of all liberals, the fully socialized human is abstracted from society; but Hegel's formulation is distinctive in also abstracting the pre-political man from his socialized behaviour and attitudes.[57] Thus, the Hegelian 'I' or 'man' of abstract right is simply an abstract 'I' or abstract 'man': a person.

The pre-political man, the liberal's natural man, is not a full individual but merely an abstract person: Hegel's logic is accurate. And, by considering the abstract person rather than the autonomous man in the pre-political condition, Hegel makes it clear at least that the pre-political condition is a realm not only of greater freedom (from laws and other governmental limits) in some ways but also of lesser freedom and of lesser humanity than the social state: for the sphere of abstract or natural rights contains not only no governmental limitations but also, among other aspects, no morality, no feelings, no individuation, and an arbitrary freedom that is itself rather limited. It is clear in the Hegelian formulation that, while the pre-political person may be limited when put in a concrete social context, he will also gain some desirable and human characteristics when he is put in a social context. What most liberals see simply as a limitation, Hegel's abstraction shows as also a development.

Hegel's second answer is that the limits imposed in society on the rights of pre-political autonomous or abstract men are actually pre-political limits as well. For the existence of the pre-political annulment of crime makes quite clear that, purely at the level of rights, individuals are limited by rights. Thus, the progress from the pre-political to the political is not the shift from autonomy and freedom to legal limits; rather, it is the shift from rights as limits to laws as limits.[58]

Hegel's third answer to the mistaken liberal conceptualization of the pre-political autonomous man with rights and liberties is simply that only in civil society and the state do rights and liberties exist in an actualized and concrete form; therefore, the state, instead of limiting rights, is in fact the precondition for their existence.[59] Without the state and political order, rights are unsure; only with society do rights exist actually and securely. Indeed, Hegel's three points together indicate the necessity of state and society for individual rights and liberties.

CONCLUSION

In sum, Hegel cogently criticizes natural rights theories for their narrowness and for their theoretical inadequacies. Yet his criticisms are made in the context of his asserting abstract rights and thus do not lead to a rejection of the rights themselves, but merely of their previous formulations. Therefore, the criticisms point the way to later portions of the *Philosophy of Right* – Hegel's treatment of morality, educative institutions, institutions that are not contractual – just as Hegel's assertion of abstract rights points the way to his exposition of civil society and other later sections of the text in which he discusses the concrete actualizations of rights.

Notes

* I should like to thank Thomas L. Pangle and P. Gordon B. Stillman for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

1 The best discussion of the part 'Abstract Right' is Joachim Ritter, 'Person und Eigentum', in his *Metaphysik und Politik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969) and (in French) as 'Personne et propriété selon Hegel', in *Archives de Philosophie*, 31, no. 2 (Apr.–June 1967), 179–201. Ritter does not deal with the section on wrong and its annulment, for which see my 'Hegel's Idea of Punishment', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (forthcoming, 1975).

2 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942; corrected edn, 1945), secs. 105–40. In citations to the *Philosophy of Right*, where the material cited is from the main text of the section, the section number alone is given; where it is from the 'remarks' Hegel added to the text, the section number is followed by 'R'; where it is from the 'additions' which later editiors appended to posthumous editions by collating student lectures notes, the section number is followed by 'A'.

3 ibid., secs 158–81.

4 ibid., secs 182–256.

5 ibid., secs 260–329.

6 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, revised edition, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: Mentor Books, 1963), *Second Treatise*, secs 4–22 (hereafter cited as *Second Treatise*). See also Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Intro. Richard S. Peters (New York: Collier Books, 1962), Part I, esp. chap. 14 and Park II, esp. chap. 17.

7 Locke, *Second Treatise*, sec. 22. Interpretations of Locke on the question of freedom are numerous; the interpretation given is a literal – some would say superficial – one, in which the only 'development' that the individual's freedom undergoes as the individual matures is to become sophisticated arbitrary freedom – for Locke's rationality is that of the 'Industrious and Rational' (sec. 34) in the sense of economic rationality, where the arbitrary free will is calculating enough to postpone an immediate satisfaction in order to obtain a larger future satisfaction. See also Adam Smith's praise of 'natural liberty' in *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (London: University Paperbacks, Methuen, 1904; reprint edn 1961), I, 157, 344; II. 37–8. 208.

8 The case is similar for Hobbes, who excludes education from the text proper of *Leviathan*, relegating it to the 'Review, and Conclusion,' pp. 503–11.

9 See esp. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), sec. 502R, and, specifically in reference to Hobbes, G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1896; reprint edn, 1955), III, 317–19.

10 John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (New York Library of Liberal Arts, 1956), chap. I, p. 14. In fairness to Mill and in the interests of accuracy, it must be noted that his other works consider morality, the family, the economic order and the state (the topics of the *Philosophy of Right*); only by abstracting *On Liberty* from Mill's total work can he be considered a pure defender of arbitrary freedom or 'freedom from'. This illegitimate abstraction has been made by some contemporary defenders of 'freedom from'; for an effective, indeed devastating criticism of their position, see the excellent but overlooked article by R. N. Berki, 'Political Freedom and Hegelian Metaphysics', *Political Studies*, 16, no. 3 (Sept., 1968), 365–83.

11 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 255 and 255R.

12 ibid., secs. 35–59.

13 Hegel's handwritten marginal note (*Randbemerkung*) to sec. 126 in his own copy of G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, fourth edition, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Ilamburg: Felix Meiner, 1955), p. 393.

14 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 37A.

15 Thus, most legitimate human relations not based on passions (like the 'concord of natural lust') are contract relations in Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Locke's *Second Treatise*. Even the relation of parent and child is a contract; see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, p. 152.

16 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 75.

17 ibid., sec. 40; Ritter, 'Person und Eigentum', sec. 7; and, among others, Karl Marx, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), Part I, pp. 5–6, and Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1955), p. 86.

18 See C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

19 Hegel's distinction here, between contractual areas of life (like civil society (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*)) and non-contractual or communal areas of life, is the precursor of, among others, Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*), trans. and ed. Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

20 See G. R. G. Mure, Foreword, in Frederick G. Weiss, *Hegel's Critique of Aristotle's Philosophy of Mind* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. xiii-xiv.

21 Thus, J. S. Mill warns, 'that so few now dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time' (Mill, *On Liberty*, chap. III, p. 82).

22 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 15A.

23 Among others, James Mill agrees with Hobbes and Locke; see John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 91. J. S. Mill poses the dichotomy that allows for the coexistence of political (or social) freedom and philosophical determinism at the beginning of *On Liberty*; see Mill, *On Liberty*, chap. I, p. 3.

24 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, p. 160; see also John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover, 1894; reprint edn, 1959), Book II, chap. 21, esp. secs 14, 27 and 29.

25 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, pp. 159–60; see also Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, chaps 21 and 27.

26 Hegel here agrees with Aristotle; see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.

27 Of himself Hobbes wrote, 'Fear and I were born twins' (quoted in Peters, Introduction, in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 7).

28 See Locke, *Second Treatise*, secs 73, 98, 117 and 119; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, p. 136.

29 See, for example, Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 17, p. 192; Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), esp. pp. 487–88.

30 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 30, pp. 255–6; Locke, *Second Treatise*, secs. 22 and 57.

31 For education in such characteristics and traits as virtue, liberality and steadfastness is, in a sense, external to the essential and logical structure of the *Leviathan*, and therefore is described, not in the text proper of the *Leviathan*, but in the appended dedicatory and concluding material; see Hobbes *Leviathan*, 'Dedicatory Epistle', p. 5, and 'Review, and Conclusion', pp. 503–11; see also Locke, *Second Treatise*, esp. secs 34 and 64.

32 The denigration of consent and obligation, and the limiting of the scope of political freedom, form two basic elements of the depoliticization inherent in much liberalism; see Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston; Little, Brown, 1960), chaps 9 and 10.

33 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 5R.

34 ibid., sec. 5R.

35 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1910; reprint edn, 1967), pp. 601–2.

36 ibid., pp. 605–6, and Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 5R and 5A.

37 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 5A and Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 605–6.

38 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 603.

39 ibid., p. 604; see also Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 5R. Many current interpretations follow Hegel's; see, for example, Alfred Cobban, *In Search of Humanity* (New York: George Braziller, 1960), esp. p. 210.

40 Hegel's critique of the conceptualization of natural rights is equally applicable as a critique of some liberals' equivalent of natural rights, the free and autonomous pre-political man.

41 Implications like the *Versachlichung* of human relations, possessive individualism and the impermanence and easy dissolubility implied in contractual marriage and state; see note 17 above; note 18 above; Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 75A, 161A and 258A; and Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 203–4.

42 Locke, *Second Treatise*, sec. 223.

43 ibid., sec. 225.

44 ibid., sec. 226.

45 ibid., sec. 78.

46 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 75, 75R and 75A. J. S. Mill denies only implicitly that the state is a contract; see Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), chap 1, pp. 6–11.

47 As in, for example, Locke, *Second Treatise*, secs 13 and 88.

48 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 102–3. This is a not uncommon distinction: see. K. G. Armstrong, 'The Retributivist Hits Back', *Mind*, 70, No. 280 (Oct. 1961), 487–8; and T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1967), sec. 178.

49 As in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 28.

50 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs. 102, 102A and 220; Stillman, 'Hegel's Idea of Punishment', sec. I.

51 It might be inferred that Hobbes and Locke, by seeing the right of punishment as a pre-political right, do not regard as theoretically central the distinctions between an interested and a distinterested judge and between a consenting and a disaffected criminal. For T. H. Green (sec. 178), they also fail to understand rights correctly.

52 Green (sec. 178) makes similar and related (and Hegelian) arguments along this line.

53 René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Descartes: Philosophical Writing*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Modern Library, 1958), esp. 'Meditation II', pp. 182–7; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I.

54 Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936), pp. 125–35; John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1935; reprint edn, 1963).

55 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St Martin's, 1964), *Second Discourse*, Preface, pp. 91–3.

56 ibid., Preface, p. 97.

57 Hegel's abstract man, the person, is abstracted from his social contexts but not from his historical development; the person lacks socialized characteristics but is none the less an abstraction from contemporary man, and thus the person claims for himself the rights that a contemporary man claims. In contrast, Rousseau's primitive man in the *Second Discourse*, when logically isolated from society, loses all his socialized and historically developed characteristics (Preface, pp. 91–7); Hobbes' natural man, when logically isolated from society, retains all his socialized and historically developed characteristics (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13).

58 The shift is desirable, of course, because the enforcement of rights is uncertain, that of laws fairly sure. Locke and Hegel agree here: see Locke, *Second Treatise* secs 13 and 22–3, and Hegel, *Philosophy of Rights*, secs 103 and 217.

59 Hegel's argument is similar to Hobbes' here: see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 17, and Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, secs 142 and 260. For Hobbes, however, rights exist in the state of nature, and war (*Leviathan*, chap. 14, pp. 103–4), whereas for Hegel rights are brought into existence only after centuries of civilization's cultural, social, spiritual and political development (*Philosophy of Right*, secs 341–60).

Hegel and liberalism

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Contemporary liberals generally regard Hegel's political theory as totally antithetical to liberalism. They take issue with his claim that a political community is defined by a number of common moral goals that are logically prior to those of its members and that the legitimacy of the state flows from upholding these, rather than the particular interests of individuals in society. They argue that the state is simply a means to the fulfilment of our private projects. It is therefore subordinate to society, merely providing a legal and institutional framework for the adjustment and reconciliation of the divergent pursuits of its different members. Hegel is charged with substituting the plurality and freedom of society for the imposed uniformity of a preconceived metaphysical entity, the 'supra-individual' state.[1]

Recent critics of modern liberalism have come to Hegel's defence. They maintain that the individualist framework adopted by contemporary liberals is incapable of explaining the myriad relationships which make up society and define the preferences and ideals of its members. However, they are equally uneasy with his metaphysical explanation of politics. They regard the community as a product of its history and tradition and refrain from following Hegel and interpreting these processes as stages in the development of Spirit or the Idea, which gives to human affairs an inner meaning and rationality.[2]

However, by so arguing Hegel's defenders would appear to concede the liberal's accusation that his philosophy is implicitly conservative; the endorsement of existing social relations as the product of a benign, if unknowable, demiurge, the 'cunning of reason'. In the first part of this paper I shall contest these interpretations, and show how Hegel's concepts of *Geist* and *Sittlichkeit* function in support of his ontological analysis of human existence. This theory completes, rather than undermines, many central liberal claims regarding the primacy of the individual in the social

process. As Section II illustrates, Hegel built upon his conception of the individual to explain the workings of the characteristic liberal institutions of private property, the economic market and representative democracy. Again, his achievement was to dissolve a number of inconsistencies within liberalism, particularly as regards the relations between the two last elements. Contrary to traditional interpretations, he did not dispute their validity as a means of making decisions and distributing goods which respect and reflect the various preferences and rights of different members of society. However, he did deny that they could be interpreted as neutral procedural mechanisms which adjudicated between essentially self-regarding individuals. In the final section, the virtues of the Hegelian approach will be highlighted by comparing his ethical view of liberalism, as a complex of customs and self-understandings orientated around the pursuit of the common good, with the neutralist stance of contemporary liberals.

I

Contemporary liberals accept Marx's contention that Hegel makes the men and women, who are the real subjects of history, predicates of a metaphysical fiction, the Idea of Spirit. This interpretation of Hegelian metaphysics underpins their claim that Hegel conceives of the state as the bearer of the collective identity of its members.[3] Hegel's position, though, is much more complex.

His entire project is an attempt to come to grips with human freedom and individuality. He recognized that the close-knit solidarity of traditional societies had broken down under the twin impact of Christianity (para. 124 R)[4] and the growth of commerce (para. 182 A). The first, in its Protestant interpretation, asserted the primacy of the individual conscience as the fount and locus of all value. The second fostered, in a variety of ways, the possessive individualism characteristic of capitalism. Both are important features of the liberal defence of individuality, and Hegel did not seek to deny either aspect. Whilst he shared his contemporaries' fascination with the Hellenic ideal of political community, he believed that the conditions of modern society entailed a fundamental rethinking of its main tenets. 'The right of the subject's particularity', he remarked,

> his right to be satisfied, or in other words the right of subjective freedom, is the pivot and centre of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right in its infinity is given expression in Christianity and it has become the universal effective principle of a new form of civilization.
>
> (para. 124 A)

The Platonic republic, which he is often seen as emulating, is vitiated by its repression of both aspects of individuality (para. 185 R). However, Hegel disputed the conclusion, drawn by many liberal theorists, of an inherent incompatibility between the individual and community, summed up in Bentham's claim that 'the community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*'.[5] Hegel aimed to avoid the extremes of both Benthamite individualism and the Platonic organicism normally attributed to him, and explain how the community provides the medium for social interaction and the fashioning of personal identity.[6] This project involved the criticism of the two alternative accounts of individual agency prominent in the contemporary liberal literature, and briefly outlined above. The empiricist model, associated with Hobbes and Bentham, regards the individual as having a number of set desires which he seeks to satisfy by an instrumental calculation of how best to maximize his utility. This model corresponds to the notion of agency appropriate to commercial transactions. The rationalist model, of which Kant is the forebear, conceives the agent as an autonomous chooser of ends, who stands aloof from his natural inclinations. This model derives from the role played by the individual conscience in Christian ethics. Both theories view society as a contract between individuals for the realization of antecedently arrived at goals. Hegel, in contrast, provides a dialectical criticism of the two accounts and attempts to show how the individual's will is realized in particular objects and mediated by certain universal norms of behaviour which are social in origin. Far from denying these two liberal views of the individual, he aims to render them coherent.

He begins by disputing the empiricist thesis, which conceives our will to act 'as an immediate existing content, i.e., as the impulses, desires, inclinations, whereby the will finds itself determined in the course of nature' (para. 11). If our character was defined by a number of accidental wants, then our identity would consist of little more than

> a medley and multiplicity of impulses, each of which is merely 'my desire' but exists alongside other desires which are likewise all 'mine'; and each of which is at the same time something universal and indeterminate, aimed at all kinds of objects and satiable in all kinds of ways. (para. 12)

Hegel questions whether the consistent willing of certain types of objects over others, which define each individual's distinctive personality, could ever emerge from this picture. Outside of a totally regulated environment, our preferences would be perennially subject to change and irreconcilable clashes arise between incompatible wants.

A utilitarian might counter that I could consistently will to maximize

my satisfactions, and hence order them appropriately. Thus I could control my desire for drink on the grounds that the hangover the following morning causes me greater pain than the immediate pleasurable feeling of intoxication. Hegel denies the validity of this approach. First, he argues that such an ordering would still be liable to uncontrollable alterations. The possible combinations of wants by the introduction of new desires, resulting from changing circumstances or new considerations, can increase *ad infinitum* (para. 16). Choosing between them will be entirely arbitrary; for '[a]n impulse is simply a uni-directional urge and this has no measuring rod in itself' (para. 17). Second, he contends that for this reason we could not rank different pleasures according to their empirical properties. Instead, an individual makes qualitative judgments concerning the desirability of different wants on the basis of how he conceives himself, not as a result of certain contingent impulses. I refrain from habitual drunkenness on the grounds that permanent inebriation would be unworthy of me, and a waste of my mental faculties. I help an old lady who has collapsed in the road, even if I have pressing business elsewhere and am tempted to let someone else do it, because I value concern for others and aspire to be a caring person. The possession of such standards of behaviour constitutes my identity, providing my actions with meaning and continuity (para. 105). Thus far from being a slave to the passions, individuals fashion their conduct to their will, just as through their labour they mould the natural world into a design of their own.

However, Hegel does not believe that these norms of conduct are solely products of our rational autonomous will, that we could or should completely transcend our nature. He agrees with Kant that the free will is 'self-determining universality' (para. 21). But the Kantian attempt to ground morality on the formal criterion of universalizability is ultimately vacuous. It is insufficiently determinate in itself to provide us with moral maxims; it can only test some existing precept. Moreover, it fails even in this capacity; for with a little ingenuity I could dress up any precept with sufficient qualifications to enable it to pass the test. The will of the completely autonomous agent, therefore, is as unstable as that of the utilitarian rational calculator. It has no real content beyond the whims of the agent, which in turn derive from his or her natural impulses. Thus the second liberal model of the individual tends to collapse into the first, with all its attendant weaknesses (paras 122–4, 135 and A).

Neither the empiricist nor the Kantian theory of human agency can provide a coherent ordering of preferences suitable as a basis for social cooperation. Hegel sought a resolution to this dilemma by a synthesis of the two. He invokes a universal element to mediate between the particularity of our wants and needs and the individuality of the subjective will. This is supplied by his concept of *Geist* or Spirit. Every community has a characteristic set of cultural norms and values inherent to the collective

practices of its members, in Hegel's terminology a *Volkgeist*. The individual shares many of the concepts of his fellows as 'a form of necessity' by virtue of the normal processes of socialization.[7] But this does not entail the complete identification of individual and social context, 'for this consciousness emanates from the individual himself and is not instilled into him by others: the individual *exists* within this substance'.[8]

The community stands in relation to the individual in much the same way as the rules of language relate to speech. Whilst vocabulary and grammar do not absolutely determine what we think and say, they do structure it. When we add or alter common usage, it is necessarily in ways compatible with intersubjective intelligibility if we are not to withdraw into a private world of our own. Even then we would necessarily retain part of this common language to think and act at all, for it is precisely this Spirit which provides the evaluative principles necessary for coherent thought and action, preventing us from falling into the arbitrariness of the subjective will or mere impulse.

The existence of intersubjective modes of understanding is basic to the development of personality. We are social beings and can only acquire the distinctive human capacities to communicate, form relationships and develop goals which render our lives meaningful, through society. Individuals draw upon the concepts and understandings of social life in the framing of their plans of life. However, this does not mean that society imposes a role upon us. Rather, we self-consciously use it to determine our own aims and purposes, just as we use language to write a novel, philosophize, ask a favour etc. . . . As a result, we do not uncritically accept all the norms and rules of our community; we can deploy them in ways that enable us to envisage alternative ways of living. The evolution of society is thus an integral part of an individual's self-realization.

If the above account is correct, then Hegel can be absolved from reducing the individual to a cypher of society or a metaphysical entity, *Geist*. He does not impose a real will on the empirical wants and desires of the agent, or reduce his or her autonomy of action. But he does regard these attributes as developing within the context of society, rather than as antecedent to it. Thus the state cannot abolish society, as some critics of Hegel's political theory suggest, since it is integral to our formation as political actors. Instead he proposed an institutional framework which would provide an arena for individuals to voice criticism of their social bonds and hence develop them as human needs change, without returning to a putative asocial state of nature of the war of all against all – the perspective of liberal contractarian theories. In the next section I shall show how Hegel's theory of the state provides the institutional counterpart to his conception of individual agency.

II

Hegel's description of the development of personality through the use of particular objects to further projects conceived within the context of certain social rules and norms can be rendered in Hegelian language as reflecting the relationship between Universal, Particular and Individual. He believes these three terms are interdependent, so that

> Everything rational shows itself to be a threefold union or syllogism [of Universal, Particular and Individual], in that each of the members takes the place both of one of the extremes and the mediating middle.[9]

Even the most casual acquaintance with the *Philosophy of Right*, a glance at the table of contents, for example, reveals this 'threefold mediation or syllogism' to be the organizing principle of the work. Thus the first syllogism – of Individual, Particular and Universal – forms the basis for the section on Abstract Right. Here the individual will finds the universal through seeking the fulfilment of the particular inclinations, needs and passions with which he or she was born via the possession of property. Yet even within this section there is a threefold mediation of the Idea. The second mediation (adopting Hegel's abbreviation), U-I-P, deals with contract – that is the regulation of individual wills once they come into contact with each other for the purposes of commerce and exchange. The final mediation, P-U-I, having the Universal as its mid-point, deals with the morality of commerce and exchange, the notions of fraud and crime. Similarly the third part of the *Philosophy of Right*, ethical life, is both the final mediation of the syllogism, P-U-I, whilst containing within it all three mediations. Thus the family is a unity founded on the immediacy of feeling, civil society a 'system of needs' based on the satisfaction of particular desires through the forces of production, whilst the state is the unity mediated by the Universal, the common good. Finally, within the state itself there are the three moments of the concept. As Hegel explained in paragraph 181 of the *Encyclopaedia*:

> the state is a system of three syllogisms: (i) The individual or person, through his particularity or physical or mental needs . . . is coupled with the Universal, i.e. with society, law, right, government. (ii) The will or action of individuals is the intermediating force which procures for these needs satisfaction in society, law, etc. . . . and which gives to society, law, etc. . . . their fulfilment and actualization. (iii) But the Universal, i.e. the state, government, and law, is the permanent underlying mean in which the individuals and their satisfaction have and receive their fulfilled reality, intermediation and persistence. Each

> of the moments of the concept, as it is brought by intermediation to coalesce with the other extreme is brought into union with itself and produces itself. . . . It is only by this triad of syllogisms with the same terms that the whole is thoroughly understood in its organisation.

This rather formal working out of the logic of the state may seem at first glance to have fully justified the chief qualms of Hegel's detractors. However, it merely summarizes and extends the thesis outlined in the first section. Hegel argues that our individuality, the feelings and desires we have, become particularized, made concrete, by finding satisfaction in the possession and creation of objects. Our rights of personality and property originate in this activity. However, human action does not occur in a social vacuum and so 'rights collide' (para. 30). We can only prevent the upshot of this contest being the rule of the strongest through a public authority, which represents the complex of rights of all its individual members and facilitates their private projects. Hegel contends that these arrangements develop out of social life and the intersubjective norms which make personal relationships possible. In Hegelian language, the moment of universality.

This logic informs his understanding of the interrelationship of the three main aspects of the liberal political settlement: personal and property rights, the economic market and representative democracy. I shall argue below that Hegel reveals how these institutions assume the theory of individual agency outlined in the previous section, their rationale being to facilitate the development of essential human powers and capacities through social cooperation.

Personal and property rights play a vital part in Hegel's theory. Developing Lockian themes,[10] he asserts that '[a] man actualizes himself only in becoming something definite, i.e. something specifically particularized' (para. 207). Possession of property enables us to gain a sense of self-hood; it externalizes our impulses and will, making us aware of our tastes and capacities (paras 34, 41, 57). Using our property, transforming it through our labour, liberates us from our desires, moulding them to our will (paras 45, 46, 59). This process of progressive self-determination becomes complete when we alienate our property and enter into exchanges with others (para. 62). Private property provides the basis for personal rights, since it is a precondition both for the development of our personality and for moral action (paras 49, 66 and R). Communal ownership, in contrast, would undermine the independence necessary for the free development of the will (paras 46, 186 R). An important corollary of this analysis is Hegel's contention that I cannot treat my person or liberties as property, since this would negate the subject of possession and entail a form of suicide (paras 66, 70).

Private property secures the necessary, but not the sufficient, conditions

for individual freedom. To identify with one's possessions involves a continued subservience to desire and externalities. Transcending this state is partially achieved through contract. Goods take on universal attributes for the purposes of exchange; we measure their worth in terms of their human use value (para. 77). However, he disputes the belief that social and contractual relationships can be regarded entirely individualistically, as instrumental calculations for maximizing personal utility (para. 187). This criticism refers back to his theory of human agency, examined earlier. If property merely served to satisfy existing impulses and desires, as an end in itself rather than a means for self-development, then there would be no reason to go beyond mere subsistence. Any increasing pressure of population on resources would yield Malthusian consequences rather than new forms of production and social cooperation. The market does not simply allow the competition of the state of nature to continue at a higher level; it transforms the individual by developing his or her capacity for self-realization (para. 187 and R). An awareness of others, as we saw, is vital for the individual to move beyond mere particularity. Hegel illustrates this by demonstrating how even the mutual security of possession evinces a pre-existing social bond; for 'I hold my property not merely by means of a thing and my subjective will, but by means of another person's will as well and so hold it in virtue of my participation in a common will' (para. 71).

Market relations, which characterize civil society, only appear to have mutual self-interest as their basis when viewed externally, by the Understanding (*Verstand*) (para. 189 A). Their true rationale, as provided by Reason (*Vernuft*), derives from the social character of the capitalist system. Building on the work of classical political economists, particularly Adam Smith and Sir James Steuart,[11] Hegel describes how the economic advances of commercial society had not only increased the scope for personal autonomy, but also generated new forms of communal attachment and solidarity.[12] Our release from a primitive dependence on nature comes with an appreciation of more universal aspects of human existence, which arises through social contacts and the search for stable shared norms to regulate our affairs. He criticizes Rousseau's belief, implicit in the contractarian tradition, that society puts a constraint on the natural freedom of the state of nature:

> Since in social needs, as the conjunction of immediate or natural needs with mental needs arising from ideas, it is needs of the latter type which because of their universality make themselves preponderant, this social moment has in it the aspect of liberation, i.e. the strict natural necessity of need is obscured and man is concerned with his own opinion, indeed with an opinion which is universal, and with a

> necessity of his own making alone, instead of with an external necessity, an inner contingency, and mere caprice.
>
> (para. 194 and R)

The 'system of needs' does not evolve from the satisfaction of the naturally given wants of isolated individuals; it provides the context in which social bonds arise through a network of reciprocal relationships, formed on the basis of a mutual recognition of certain universally valued goods (paras 190–2). Commodities cease to have any value in themselves but derive their worth from human need. This facilitates the development of a money economy, whereby incommensurables can be exchanged using a single medium (para. 63 A).

Outside a subsistence economy we need others to provide certain of our basic needs. This requirement increases as the division of labour extends and our wants get more complex, for example, today not only have our staple foods passed through a network of different procedures, refiners and brokers, but we have developed needs and tastes for goods, such as cars and home computers, which can only be cooperatively produced. Even if 'each member is his own end', locked in the pursuit of self-interested particularity, 'except in contact with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends' (para. 182 A). A quasi-Smithian 'invisible hand', rechristened the 'cunning of reason', is at work in commercial transactions, so that 'if I further my ends, I further the ends of the universal, and this in turn furthers my end' (para. 184 A). My self-interest causes me to add to the community's wealth by both producing more and increasing my demand for the goods of others:

> That is to say, by a dialectical advance, subjective self-seeking turns into the mediation of the particular through the universal, with the result that each man in earning, producing and enjoying on his own account is *eo ipso* producing and earning for the enjoyment of everyone else.
>
> (para. 199)

Despite these advantages, Hegel appreciated that the complexity of modern industrial society puts this sense of community under a severe strain, and that on a conscious level 'in civil society universal and particular have fallen apart' (para. 184 A). Hegel identified two threats to community feeling within the industrial system. First, although the division of labour ties individuals together through various forms of economic interdependence, it shuts them off socially from their fellows. People increasingly identify with the particular groups they belong to, their family and workmates, and lose a sense of membership of a wider community. Second, as industrial labour becomes increasingly mechanical and

monotonous, it has an enervating effect on the worker, subduing his will to rise above basic natural needs (para. 243).[13] Personal and economic relations in civil society are conducted within a legal framework which applies certain universal criteria of justice. These regulations reflect the interconnectedness of civil society and the interest each individual has in the universal observance of rules securing possession (para. 235). However, the atomism of modern life threatens the system, for the pursuit of personal satisfactions increasingly takes precedence over a knowledge of, and hence a concern for, the common interest (para. 236 R).

Hegel illustrates this dilemma by addressing the problem of poverty.[14] A purely economic theory of justice, such as Hume's, based on a mutual interest in maximizing production, proves self-contradictory. The 'unimpeded activity' of civil society, centred simply on the unrestrained gratification of human desire, leads to periodic crises of overproduction (para. 243). When the demand for a particular commodity ceases, the workers, who, due to the increasing specialization of labour, depend for their livelihood on this product, lose their jobs. Whilst a safety net of state benefits and voluntary charity may prevent the indigent from actually starving (para. 242 and R). Hegel appreciates that it is the drop in relative standing which counts. The unemployed lose the sources of self-respect deriving from labour and become 'a rabble of paupers'. At the same time this brings with it 'conditions which greatly facilitate the concentration of disproportionate wealth in a few hands' (para. 244).

Plant, Avineri and others, have followed Marx and argued that Hegel has no solution to this problem.[15] His philosophy commits him to offering a redescription of society capable of reconciling us to it, but eschews the structural changes necessary to alter the social practices which produce the poor and oppressed in the first place. Paradoxically, whilst Marx and liberals agree that Hegel's philosophy amounts to a 'pantheistic mysticism', Marx maintains that he deploys it to defend the economic system underlying liberalism.[16] However, as we saw in section I, Hegel clearly rejects the possessive individualist mentality Marx imputes to liberal theory. With extraordinary prescience, Hegel foresaw that if economic competition went unchecked then the only solution to overproduction would be the creation of new markets by colonization, a path already taken by England (para. 246). But he did not advocate this solution. As long as we remain within the perspective of political economy, of instrumental action to realize self-interested goals, then unrestricted economic expansion seems the only answer to this problem. However, for Hegel the unchecked pursuit of particularity is a pathological state. As we noted in section 1, our projects only gain meaning and purpose, become expressions of our individuality and autonomy, within the context of a shared set of norms. These norms make social life possible, since they enable us to relate our own interests with those of others as part of

the complex tapestry of universal values which make for a worthwhile life. The restricted mentality of the market is transcended through political institutions capable of fostering a general commitment to providing the social conditions necessary for the realization of human capacities generally, rather than mere individual self-interest.

In perceiving the need for political control of the economy, Hegel did not seek to get the populace to identify completely and unreflectively with the state's priorities by a mixture of force and propaganda, as those critics who accuse him of totalitarianism maintain. The transition from civil society to the state does not entail the complete subordination of the one to the other. As always, Hegel does not seek to deny either particularity or individuality, but merely to provide the possibilities for mediating between the two by appealing to universal values necessary for the expression of both. Personal and property rights are not sacrificed upon entering the state. The state exists to uphold them; it represents the entire complex of rights necessary for the self-development of each member of society:

> it is the end immanent within them, and its strength lies in the unity of its own universal end and aim with the particular interest of individuals, in the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against it.
>
> (para. 261)

Society provides the medium for the realization of our individual projects and the source of our cooperation with each other. To become conscious of this requires politics, the explicit recognition of a public dimension to our seemingly purely private concerns. Far from imposing the state's authority upon society, Hegel regards it as emerging from our social activities. He remarks that the formation of subgroups within the system of needs, particularly of the professional associations or corporations, provides key institutions for the development of social awareness and combating the subjectivism encouraged by the capitalist mode of industrial production (para. 264). They educate us to take the needs of others into account and to cooperate with them (para. 253 R). They provide a means for the individual to go beyond his particular interest and perceive the validity of an allegiance to the common good. Thus poverty sheds its degrading aspect, for

> Within the corporation the help which poverty receives loses its accidental character and the humiliation wrongfully associated with it. The wealthy perform their duties to their fellow associates and thus riches cease to inspire either pride or envy.
>
> (para. 253 R)

Bernard Cullen has argued that because Hegel excludes the indigent and unskilled wage labourers from the corporations and estates (para. 252 A), they remain outside society as an unintegrated rabble.[17] He correctly notes that Hegel's attitude reflects a common liberal fear of giving political rights to the propertyless. Indeed, Hegel has well-articulated philosophical reasons for believing that property is a precondition for independent, responsible behaviour. Yet this observation neither logically commits Hegel to a restricted electorate nor renders poverty an intractable problem for him. The dispossession of the labouring classes stems, on his analysis, from 'the luxury of the business classes and their passion for extravagance' (para. 253). But the corporations will overcome their particularity and hence modify their behaviour so that crises of overproduction will not occur. The solution to the problem of poverty comes not from the integration of the poor, so much as the modification of the attitudes of the rich. It was the lack of such institutions in England which motivated his attack on the English Reform Bill. Without social reform as well, the enfranchising of a penurious rabble would spell disaster. Hegel did not reject the objectives of the Reform Bill, but believed a very different institutional framework was needed to attain the desired aim of 'bringing justice and fairness into the allotment of the parts played by the different classes and divisions of the people in the election of members of Parliament'.[18]

Social atomism and rampant individualism are not inevitable features of capitalist systems. They only flourish when the lack of mediating institutions cuts individuals off from their fellow citizens and a perception of their obligations to the whole. Hegel's argument is closely related to his discussion of personal identity. For without a sense of others we can only have a very inadequate grasp of ourselves. We cannot understand the values which give meaning to life and provide us with personal goals without a knowledge of the needs and requirements of others, for we articulate our private aspirations through a public language. To separate out our private rights from our public duties can only return us to the *bellum omnium contra omnes* of the state of nature, where each person is a prey to his or her capricious desires for a disparate set of objects.

This observation lies behind Hegel's reasoning that people enter politics via the estates rather than directly. Hegel's *Stande* reflect the various economic and social functions people perform. The three main divisions comprise (i) the agrarian, (ii) the commercial and industrial and (iii) the bureaucratic estates (para. 202). Although the *Pobel* or rabble have no place within the scheme (para. 244 A), skilled industrial workers belong to the second group (para. 204). Some critics have misconstrued Hegel's theory as advocating a system of functional representation, which reduces the individual to a mere cog in the machinery of the state. However, Hegel clearly intends these intermediary institutions to liberate the indi-

vidual from the narrow perspective of his role within the productive process. His criticism of direct democracy merely echoes traditional liberal fears of the tyranny of the majority. Subdued by the conditions of industrial labour and isolated from their fellows by the atomism of modern social life, the people are a prey to the manipulation of any demogogue willing to appeal to the lowest common denominator. Fortunately 'this atomistic and abstract point of view' is mitigated by the circles of association in civil society.

> To picture these communities as once more breaking up into a mere conglomeration of individuals as soon as they enter the field of politics, i.e. the field of the highest concrete universality, is *eo ipso* to hold civil and political life apart from one another and as it were to hang the latter in the air, because the basis could then only be the abstract individuality of caprice and opinions, and hence it would be grounded on chance and not on what is absolutely stable and justified.
>
> (para. 303 R)

Hegel makes three main criticisms of direct democracy. First, he argues that because of the complexity of modern industrial society, ordinary voters lack the technical expertise to decide issues of public policy for themselves and perforce must rely on the opinions of specialists (para. 301 R, 308 R). Second, the atomism and diversity of contemporary social relations restrict the benefits of participation, which only obtain in a small, relatively homogeneous group (para. 303 R). Hegel anticipated recent arguments about voter rationality in situations where any one vote is unlikely to affect the outcome, commenting that popular suffrage in large states 'leads inevitably to electoral indifference' so that 'election actually falls into the power of a few, of a caucus' (para. 311 R).[19] More seriously, he maintained that these conditions, combined with the individualistic ethos they encouraged, militated against any consensual agreement on a general will. This requires voters to be both well-disposed towards and well-informed about each other – clearly problematical once the electorate goes above a certain size and a degree of social differentiation exists. Intense minorities are liable to develop who will be consistently outvoted by a majority either ignorant or uncomprehending of their needs. Finally, Hegel challenges the coherence of the Rousseauian/Kantian doctrine of the universal will. As we noted in section I, he maintains that the criterion of universalizability is totally vacuous and cannot either provide us with moral axioms or adjudicate between existing ones. Rather, it has the deleterious effect of giving our individualistic wants and desires the force of a moral law, as in the case of religious and political fanatics. The anarchy of the French Revolution, which culminated in the forced imposition of the will of a particular group on

the populace, and Fichte's advocacy of government by an enlightened elite illustrated the likely repugnant outcome of attempting to deduce social institutions and concrete duties from the abstract will of the individual subject (para. 258 R).

Hegel's two-tier system aims to counteract these defects of Rousseauian democracy. It is participatory at each level, within the corporations, estates and legislature, since within small bodies such as these the virtues of discussion prevail, based on a certain coherence of common interests. However, he does not regard the delegates sent by the various associations to the estates as bound to the particular interests of the group they represent. Quite the reverse; they are chosen 'on the strength of confidence felt in them . . . as having a better understanding of [public] affairs than their electors'. Moreover, 'their assembly is meant to be a living body in which all members deliberate in common and reciprocally instruct and convince each other'. Debates are not formal affairs, in which each participant knows his opinion from the start; rather agreement is reached through collective discussions. Public involvement in national politics does not cease merely because their delegates decide these issues. 'Estates assemblies are a great spectacle and an excellent education for the citizens, and it is from them that the people learns best how to recognize the character of its interests' (para. 315 A). By participating at the local levels of community life and watching the national assemblies, people become better able both to judge the quality of delegates and to accept the legitimacy of the public authority. Thus far from denigrating freedom of speech and assocation, Hegel had a Tocquevillian faith in their value and necessity for transforming the private seeker after personal satisfaction into a citizen concerned with the public weal (paras 317–19).

Hegel clearly repudiates the bureaucratic, totalitarian conception of the state, often attributed to him, since it would deny both particularity and individuality. Nor did he believe that a communal spirit could be artificially created by the state, as Fascist interpretators sometimes maintained. He explicitly rejected the 'machine state', arguing that:

> the government must leave to the freedom of the citizens whatever is not necessary for its appointed function of organizing and maintaining authority. This is true regardless of utility, because the freedom of the citizen is inherently sacrosant.[30]

Unless the state has the reflective allegiance of its members it 'hangs in the air' (para. 265). Freedom of speech and association, therefore, play a vital part in his theory, because they encouraged the active participation in political processes necessary to generate the social bonds which mitigate the atomistic individualism of commerce (paras 260, 264, 317–19).

The Hegelian state reconciles the two conceptions of individual free-

dom characteristic of liberalism, namely, the Kantian view of following self-posited goals, and the Hobbesian notion of instrumental action for the satisfaction of certain innate desires. Whilst the former aspiration belongs to our role as political actors within a democracy, the second characterizes our activity as producers and consumers in the market. Contemporary theorists have noted a lack of fit between the two, creating a legitimation crisis reflecting the tension between our two personae. For example, as democrats we may agree on the necessity of certain public utilities which we nevertheless resent paying for as individualistic members of society, when they conflict with our private interest.[21] Thus we may support state education but send our children to private schools, or object to paying for it if we are childless. Hegel seeks to modify such conflicts by fostering an awareness of how our own projects fit in with those of others, forming part of a complex web of universal values which together make human life worth while.[22] Liberal institutions derive their rationale from revealing the respects in which social cooperation is vital to the pursuit of our numerous private goals:

> The result is that the universal does not prevail or achieve completion except along with particular interests and through the cooperation of particular knowing and willing; and individuals likewise do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal in the light of the universal and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end. The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself.
>
> (para. 260)

III

Hegel neither treats the community as a supra-individual entity above the individuals who compose it, nor adopts a conservative relativism which merely endorses social relations as they stand. As we have seen, he relies upon a theory of individuality to provide criteria by which different social arrangements can be evaluated. However, despite the fact that Hegel addresses the problem of differentiation in industrial society, a critic could still object that this process has gone so far that we are no longer capable of sharing the common system of values required by his theory. The divisions in Western democracies derive as much, if not more, from ideological, ethnic or religious differences than from conflicts

between various economic groups. This fact has induced many contemporary liberals to deny that one can ground liberalism in a concept of the good; it must rather remain neutral between different conceptions. They argue that equality of respect demands that the rights of individuals to pursue their own view of the good take precedence over a putative common good. If correct, neutralist liberalism would undermine Hegelian ethical liberalism. In this last section I shall briefly show how if their diagnosis of the atomization of modern society is true, it challenges their own theory as much as, if not more than, his.

For neutralist liberals, agnosticism concerning the possibility of a shared political morality leads them to interpret the market and democracy as procedural mechanisms for co-ordinating personal preferences. They habitually emphasize one or other of these institutions and accordingly adopt one or other of the afore-mentioned ideal types of the liberal agent. Both versions ascribe a priority to the individual's right to pursue his or her life free from external interference deriving from a public conception of the good. This limitation also excludes an appeal to any aggregative principle, such as utilitarianism involves, which might have met a formal requirement of counting each individual's interests equally, on the grounds that it does not respect the incommensurable differences between the goods people desire. As we have seen, Hegel provides trenchant criticisms of the unrestricted adoption of either of these mechanisms and the model of human agency underlying them. His main complaint is that both separate out our rights to pursue our own interests from our duties to others. As a result, neither can generate even minimal public provision of goods. For example, in libertarian defences of the market model of politics government action may not impose coercive burdens on private initiatives. The only rationale of the state is, in Hobbesean-Lockian fashion, to protect the rights possessed by individuals in the state of nature. But this creates an insoluble dilemma, since amongst these rights they accord pride of place to an inviolable right to property – the *raison d'être* of the market approach. The minimal state could only be financed by coercing individuals into paying for it. We noted earlier Hegel's argument that the unchecked pursuit of self-interest eventually produced recurrent market crises of overproduction, and that the self-regulatory mechanisms of the capitalist system were not infallible. Some government regulation would therefore be in the collective self-interest. But even assuming that all could rationally perceive this from a purely egoistical point of view, 'free-riding' by those who believed they were safe from ruin would remain an insuperable problem. The argument that this quandary can be overcome by introducing market incentives which harness material self-interest to promoting the common good merely introduces coercion by the back door in the form of a manipulative and paternalistic government.

Dissatisfaction with the image of humans as rational egoists has led democrats to style them as autonomous choosers. However, the second model suffers from analogous difficulties. Agreement on any policy will require near unanimous agreement. Without unanimity the minority could always claim to have been denied their freedom by the majority, and in societies as diverse and complex as our own there is both a technical and a logical limitation on reaching such agreement. Too many diverse decisions would be required for us to have the time or the knowledge to make them. As Hegel noted in his reflections on the French Revolution, the problem can only be got over by a forced uniformity imposed by a terror which eliminates the outspoken dissidents and cowers the rest into submission.

Hegel aimed to avoid both these extremes, believing that intermediary bodies, such as the corporations, would enable individuals to connect their particular goals with those of the rest of society and generate certain shared political norms. Neutralist liberals appear to believe that social differentiation and political pluralism are incompatible with a system of shared values. Hegel, in contrast, holds that the articulation of different interests can only occur in an uncoerced manner when there is agreement on general principles. A commitment to the common good does not restrict political disagreement to disputes over the correct means to realize agreed ends. For rival groups might well debate the bearing of their shared beliefs on a particular issue, and hence their import and meaning. Though they may have a common conceptual framework for describing these ends, discussion of their implementation will raise questions of their worth and value. There is therefore no warrant for the belief of either Hegel's detractors or some of his defenders that his theory entails our unreflective identification with the values of our community. However, at a deep metaphysical level, he shows how the claims of differentiation are underwritten by a fundamental unity. This is the challenge neutralist liberalism has to meet.

Hegel contends that Particularity and Individuality must be mediated by the Universal. In other words, that an awareness of our essential capacities and needs comes through social interaction with other people and the development of intersubjective norms and values. Contemporary liberals treat the market and democracy as neutral mechanisms for the pursuit of private goals. Hegel interprets them as public agencies for the socialization of individuals and the development of a common stock of norms. Whereas they adopt either instrumental or self-developmental views of human agency, or separate the two from each other, Hegel explicitly unites them. This produces a very different description of the liberal institutional framework, which makes this possible, to theirs, and is arguably less fraught with internal contradictions.

Notes

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1 Criticisms of this sort abound in English commentaries, for example L. T. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State: A Criticism* (London, 1918), K. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 2 vols. (London, 1945), Vol. II, pp. 25–76. Yet they appear even in intellectual traditions more sympathetic to Hegel, for example B. Croce, 'Hegel. Lo "stato etico" ', *Etica e Politica*, 2nd edn econ. (Bari, 1973), pp. 213–15, N. Bobbio, *Studi Hegeliani* (Turin, 1981), pp. 67, 74, 82, 189, F. Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Munich and Berlin, 1924), pp. 427–60, Rudolf Wildenmann, *Macht und Konsens als Problem der Innen- und Aussernpolitik*, 2nd edn (Cologne and Opladen, 1967), pp. 6–7. Of course not only liberals make this point; the argument originates with Marx's 'Critique of Hegel's doctrine of the state' (1843), in *Early Writings*, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 72–4.

2 The three most important recent English commentaries all adopt this view: S. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge, 1982), Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, 1975) and Raymond Plant, *Hegel*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1983).

3 As K.-H. Ilting has pointed out, 'This picture of Hegel accords so well with the conceptions of conservative, liberal and even fascist authors that even today it is often accepted and transmitted without question.' 'Hegel's concept of the state and Marx's early critique', in Z. A. Pelczynski, ed., *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 93–113. Like all other students of Hegel, I am indebted to Ilting's work in rejecting this interpretation.

4 All paragraph numbers refer to *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1952). R refers to the Remarks and A to the Additions, or the appended student notes, to Hegel's paragraphs.

5 J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart (London, 1970), p. 12.

6 My account draws inspiration from R. N. Berki, 'Political freedom and Hegelian metaphysics', *Political Studies* XVI (1968), 365–83, Charles Taylor, 'What is human agency?' in T. Michel, ed., *The Self: Psychological and Philosophical Issues* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 103–35, Bernard Williams, 'Persons, character and morality', in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 1–19 and A. S. Walton, 'Hegel: individual agency and social context', in L. S. Stepelevich and David Lamb, eds, *Hegel's Philosophy of Action* (Atlantic Highlands, 1983), pp. 75–92.

7 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975), p. 52.

8 ibid.

9 *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1975), para. 187 zus. (amended trans. R.B.). See too paras 6, 181.

10 Important discussions of this topic appear in Joachim Ritter, 'Person und Eigentum', in *Metaphysik und Politik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), Peter G. Stillman, 'Persons, property and civil society in the *Philosophy of Right*', in D. P.

Verene, ed., *Hegel's Social and Political Thought* (New Jersey and Sussex, 1980), pp. 103–18 and Alan Ryan, *Property and Political Theory* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 118–41. Hegel's interest in property as embodying the personality of the labourer goes back to a study of Locke whilst in Tübingen: see Paul Chamley, 'Les Origines de la pensée économique de Hegel', *Hegel Studien* Vol. III, p. 226.

11 Hegel made detailed notes of Sir James Steuart's *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* (1767) from February to May 1799 according to K. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben* (Berlin, 1844), p. 86. Apparently he probably also knew Smith's work then, since he possessed a copy of the Basel edition of the 1791 text. See Norbert Waszek, 'The origins of Hegel's knowledge of English', *The Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* vii (1983), 8–27 for details of his acquisition of these texts.

12 The centrality of classical political economy to Hegel's social philosophy has been stressed by many recent commentators. The following works are of particular importance: Paul Chamley, *Economie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel* (Paris, Dalloz, 1963), Manfred Riedel, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat bei Hegel* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1970), Raymond Plant, 'Hegel and political economy', *New Left Review* 103–4, (1977), 79–93, 103–13.

13 Rosenkranz comments that in his notes on Steuart, 'Hegel fought against what was dead with noble feeling . . . as he strove to save the *Gemut* of man amidst the competition and mechanical interaction of labour and commerce', *Hegels Leben*, p. 86. Plant illustrates how Hegel's theory of alienation goes back to Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, and that he applied these insights in a criticism of Smith's description of a pin factory in the *Jenenser Realphilosophie* I, ed. Lasson (Leipzig, 1932), p. 328. See R. Plant, 'Economic and social integration in Hegel's political philosophy', in D. P. Verene, ed., *Hegel's Social and Political Thoughts*, p. 79 [reprinted above, pp. 220–47. R.S.].

14 Hegel's concern with this problem, as all the commentators cited in note 15 have shown, is even more explicit in the *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, and the Griesheim notes. Whilst not ignoring the important scholarly work of Ilting and Riedel on the intellectual development of Hegel's views, for my purposes it is sufficient to examine the texts he chose to publish. Suffice it to say, his critique of classical political economy is absolutely clear from these earlier versions.

15 Plant, 'Hegel and political economy', pp. 111–13, Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, pp. 147–54 and Bernard Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought: An Introduction* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 85–116. I find all three overstate their case as to the degree to which Hegel is *logically* incapable of resolving this dilemma. For a corrective to these views see A. S. Walton, 'Economy, utility and community in Hegel's theory of civil society', in Z. A. Pelczynski, ed., *The State and Civil Society*, pp. 244–61. I am grateful to Raymond Plant and Tony Walton for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

16 Marx, 'Critique of Hegel's doctrine of the state', p. 61. For important criticism see K.-H. Ilting, 'The dialectic of civil society', in Z. A. Pelczynski, *The State and Civil Society*, pp. 211–26 [reprinted above, pp. 274–92 R.S.].

17 Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought*, pp. 97–116. Cullen's error, I believe, is to mistake Hegel's political conservatism for the philosophical logic of his argument. Although this is easily done, one should remember Hegel's warning that philosophy is limited by positive right, and must recognize the contingent as such even whilst 'overcoming' it.

18 'The English Reform Bill' (1831), in *Political Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1964), p. 295.

19 See too, 'English Reform Bill', p. 320.

20 'The German Constitution' (1799–1862), in *Political Writings*, pp. 161–2. The 1818 text of the *PhR* reveals Hegel to have been even more adamant about the need for political participation. Censorship following the Karlsbad Decrees led to a sometimes contradictory toning down of these passages (paras 260–5) in the published version of 1820. See Ilting, 'Hegel's concept of the state', pp. 98–104.

21 The thesis originates with J. Habermas, who claims to find the origins of this problem within Hegel's account of modern society, for example 'On social identity', *Telos*, 19 (1974), 97–8.

22 These themes are more fully addressed in my 'Hegel's conception of the state and political philosophy in a post-Hegelian world', *Political Science*, 38, (1986), 99–112.

Hegel's ambiguous legacy for modern liberalism

Charles Taylor

I am going to try to put together a rather long argument of connected issues concerning Hegel's contribution to modern liberalism, but more particularly to a set of issues concerning the relation between law and politics that is central to modern liberalism. I think the interest partly lies in their connection. Hegel's contribution to modern liberalism is complicated, ambivalent and double-sided. There is something very important in it, and also something potentially disastrous.

I want to start from a very common distinction that is often made in political theory about the priority of the right over the good or the good over the right. A word of explanation of this hermetic language, which may be familiar to some but not entirely clear to others, is in order. We can pick it up first of all as a discussion of the nature of moral theory. There has been a powerful movement in modern times, from about the seventeenth century, to replace ethics which are grounded on the good with ethics that are grounded on a concept of right. Let us take Aristotle as our starting point for ethics grounded on the good. In Aristotelian ethics, the key concept is a notion of the good life towards which we ought to aspire: the kind of life that is good for human beings. The issue of what is the right thing to do at any given time is determined for ourselves in terms of this prior, more fundamental and more important concept of the good life. The right thing to do is that which will contribute, to put it simply, to the good life in any given situation. For a variety of reasons, in the modern period we have a widespread, and widely ramifying movement against not only Aristotle as such, but against this whole structure of thought. Let me just mention some of these arguments quickly, because they keep surfacing. One argument derives from a set of reasons involving epistemology, or with a sense of moral scepticism. We are not as certain as Aristotle was about what a good life is. This is

a contentious or uncertain matter, and we cannot base anything solid on it. That is an epistemological argument.

Also, there is a set of moral/political arguments centring on human freedom, or a new, modern definition of freedom defined as giving oneself one's own purposes or one's own law. And there are corresponding conceptions of equality, that everyone ought to be equally entitled to the freedom to determine their own ends and purposes. Now this sense of freedom and equality has also generated a certain suspicion towards Aristotelian notions of the good life, for these notions seem to assume that there is, after all, one clearly set standard. Perhaps not everyone realized it, but the wise certainly saw it as the right standard, and it applied to everyone whether they recognized it or not.

So for a very complex set of reasons which have to do both with epistemology and with morals – the kind of overdetermined set of reasons which actually underlie most philosophical changes at any time, even though the motives are not always recognized by philosophers who make the changes – there has been a move to supplant Aristotle. This type of ethical structure and ethical thinking was to be replaced with one that puts first what I call the right, that is, one which purports to be able to determine what we ought to do, the right, without grounding this on a prior concept of the good. The way in which it is purported that one can do this is to develop some kind of procedure, grounded supposedly in reason, which will allow one to generate through a rational procedure what is the right thing to do in given circumstances without having to use as part of one's premises a particular concept of the good. Now right away you will see that I shall be using the distinction between the right and the good in a different way from the way it is usually invoked. The way I have set it up here, it actually encompasses more thinkers and movements among those who put the right primary than it is usually taken to include. I am borrowing the terms of course. Originally, I think it was the intuitionists, David Ross and Harold Pritchard, who used this language of the right and the good. They used it to oppose a Kantian-derived theory to a utilitarian theory. 'Deontological' and 'teleological' are another set of buzz words that has been used for this purpose. I have rewritten this distinction with the important aim of including the utilitarians among the primacy-of-the-right theorists. The utilitarians have a notion of the good, in the sense of a goal we aim for, but it is not the good in the sense in which Aristotle used it. The good as it figures in the utilitarian argument is simply the *de facto* desire. It is not the good in the Aristotelian sense of what is shown by nature to be a higher goal that we are bound to follow by its very nature; what I call a strongly valued good. And in the sense that it rejects a concept of a strongly valued good as a cornerstone of ethics, utilitarianism is a precursor of Kantianism.

Utilitarianism also has a procedure; the procedure is maximization, the summing of desired ends. Now of course, Kant rebels against this variant of utilitarianism and sees all sorts of problems in it which I do not need to rehearse. He provides another kind of procedure; and also since then we have had a number of other proposals, most notably from Rawls, and more recently another variant of proceduralist ethics from Habermas. This incorporates important changes in relation to Kant, but still has this basic structure.

We also have at the beginning of the modern era independent application of this turn of thinking to politics – independent, that is, of its application to morals. Proceduralism can be something that you take on board as your whole theory of morality or it can be taken on board in a narrower compass as your theory of a political right independent of considering what a good life is for an individual. We have at the beginning of the modern era this analogous move restricted to the political sphere. I want to look at the rise of contract theories in the seventeenth century in this light. The crucial question about judging society is not what is a good society, that is, a good form of life that it embodies. The crucial issue is that of origin or procedure: did it come about through consent? This is a shift from a good-orientated theory to a right-based theory which makes some procedure central.

Now I want to bring this all together to look at an influential theory at this time in the United States. I am particularly thinking of Ronald Dworkin's definition of liberalism. Dworkin says, in his definition of liberalism, that a liberal society is

> one where political decisions must be as far as possible independent of any particular conception of the good life, or of what gives value to life. Since the citizens of a society differ in their conception, the government does not treat them as equals if it prefers one conception to another.[1]

Treating people as equals is fundamental to Dworkin's definition of liberalism. He has defined it in such a way that the political structure must be grounded again on the right. We must not take a concept of what the good life is as the basis for a given political structure, or even in some variants of the theory, for particular legislation in that structure. On the contrary, we need to have normative standards for both structure and legislation come from a normative theory which puts the right as fundamental and therefore eschews the issue of the good or leaves it open to individuals. The case of Dworkin is interesting because his view is different from the mainstream position, in that he separates himself from any arguments of moral scepticism. Dworkin has stated consistently that he has no quarrel with the concept of the good life, the fundamental serious-

ness of which is cognitively understood. But the other motivation I mentioned, the historic motivation of freedom and equality, is of course central to his political view.

Now over and against this picture of modern liberalism is what we call the civic humanist position. Civic humanism profoundly influenced Hegel, and it has a view of politics that portrays this kind of liberalism as impossible. It offers a critique of liberalism on two levels, branding it as undesirable in one way, while arguing that in some important sense, it is impossible in another. I will return to this later, but first I would like to explore the inner logic of this position in order to confront it with the liberal one that I have been describing.

Let us go right back to the models of Greece and Rome, which were so important throughout our modern history. Again and again, there are writers who reach back and take them as models. Here we have societies of citizen self-rule. A key concept among them is that which I call citizenship dignity.[2] Freedom in one of its meanings carries this notion of citizen dignity, and the underlying intuition here is that as a citizen, I am an agent – I act in the world, I do significant things – as against a metic, or a slave, or a non-citizen who lives in a purely private sphere prior to any public life. Now this depends on an all-important set of distinctions which turn on the difference between private and public. Already the concept of significance which figures in this formulation, in the idea that action for the polis is significant in a way that action in private life is not, depends on one concept of the public. What makes the action significant is that it is action for the polis; it is action which preserves or enhances or allows the polis or the republic to continue. So that significance is tied in with concern for the community, in contrast to that which concerns my situation in life or my particular interests.

Significant action, in turn, was linked very closely with fame and glory and linked in a much closer way than we tend to allow for in our modern concept. Our modern understanding of human life has generated such a powerful conception of the private person and of inwardness that we tend to loosen the connection which was much closer for the Greeks. Thus, that fame which attached to greatness or significance of action in public life was not thought of as simply the consequence of this action, if we mean by this the purely contingent kind. It was thought of as the obverse to greatness, as belonging normally to greatness. Of course, there could be some special and reprehensible set of interventions, whereby citizens out of jealousy or ill-will would try to frustrate this connection by dishonouring an important person. But the idea was that greatness and fame intrinsically belong together. Now fame presupposes a very strong concept of the public. I think this is one of the key differences between the first kind of liberalism and civic humanism. The strong concept of the public here is the concept of what I want to call shared significance. Perhaps

'shared' does not quite capture the important distinction, because there are two kinds of sharing: there is a strong and a weak kind. I want to call the weak kind convergence; that would be the case where I privately think something is important and you privately think something is important and it turns out that most of us or all of us feel the same. That is significantly different from sharing in the strong sense where we share public space, the difference being that in this case the good we share in part effectively turns on our sharing; the sharing in itself is valued. In the first case, this does not apply. As you look at a good like fame, which was terribly important to people of that age, you can see that it presupposes a strong sense of shared significance. It is not fame in the sense of a lot of people privately admiring someone. Fame is recognition in public space. This distinction between the strong and weak publicity, or sharing/convergence is a distinction not just between two kinds of beings to whom something is important, but actually is a distinction which is significant in itself. It is something that can be desired or can be important too.

Now there is a particular notion of a public institution which turns on this strong concept of shared space, the concept of what bonds citizens to the polis or republic. The set of public institutions and practices – the 'laws' – were based on the understanding that they were the common repository of the citizen's dignity. Citizens love the laws because they are the common repository of their freedom (if you use this word in its ancient sense). Why is this form of life a repository for our freedom? Because without this law we would slide into despotism, which is the rule of one person alone. And in case of the rule of one person alone, that person would be the only one who would be honoured and have fame. In despotism, there is in some sense no public space at all, or, if you want to use the term in another sense, there is a quite different kind of public space, one which is nourished simply by the despot, in which there is no other free and unconstrained people. Of course, despots commonly have themselves praised, like Stalin, who had people write poems about him in *Pravda*. But, as is well known, this is something which is fundamentally different from fame in the sense of praise and glory in the mouths and judgment of the people. It is different not because the same good is distributed unequally to one person in the despotic case compared with its distribution to many in the other, but rather it is a different kind of good. So here again this notion of the significant is tied to a certain type of public space, which in turn is tied to a certain kind of equality. These are all linked together non-contingently, and that is why the citizens love the republic as a repository of their common citizen dignity.

This common allegiance militated against what otherwise would have been tremendously disruptive forces in the republic – disruptive because this kind of polity allowed full scope for rival ambition. Rivalry and ambition were almost the name of the game. Life was striving for fame.

Not everybody could be the most famous leader, and there was an agonistic feature to this society. What could nevertheless hold it together is the obverse of this good that everyone seeks for themselves. The obverse side is that this good itself presupposes solidarity in maintaining the laws, a condition of there being genuine fame. Of course, great, ambitious people can aspire to overturn this and seek something else which they then enjoy as despots. But in principle, the love of the fame is linked to the preservation of the laws, and hence contains its own safeguard. This common love of the laws was a shared good in a strong sense.

Now the great alternative to this view about what holds free society together is the one propounded by some modern theorists, conceptions of society ordered by what we can call invisible-hand mechanisms.[3] The prime example is the market. But not only the market. There is a very interesting mixture among the thinkers who put together the Constitution of the United States 200 years ago. In some parts of their minds, they are responding to the rhetoric and the thought of republicans. In other parts of their minds, they were responding to new developments in modern theory which concerned how to put together a Constitution, so that regardless of the motivation of the particular citizens, their action in public life would tend to sustain freedom. The Constitution would be so designed that the energies would be channelled towards the maintenance of stability and freedom. There is a kind of thinking that says: let the motivation of the players be what it may be – be it the most self-regarding or private that one may conceive – nevertheless the structure of the society will ensure that their actions will redound to the good. This is of course the radical alternative to the civic humanist view, which, on the contrary, looks on the privatization of people's motivation as corruption and as preparing the way for despotism.

So we have these two conceptions of what can make a free society possible; one which makes common meanings and shared good absolutely central to the preservation of the society and the other which says that the motivation issue is unimportant. The latter says we need a structure which, in invisible-hand fashion, behind the backs of the subjects and independent of the forms of motivation, will lead their actions towards certain patterns that preserve freedom.

Now there is no question where Hegel stands on this issue. He did indeed note the operation of an invisible-hand mechanism at a certain level of civil society, but this could never be the adequate form for the state. In this sense, Hegel is to be placed in the civic humanist tradition, And that is why we can derive important arguments from Hegel about why the liberal society as described by Dworkin is in a sense impossible.

Let us explore the characteristics of the humanist society to see which of these are conceivable in a modern free society. The humanist society

is founded on a common understanding about the good life. In its original version everyone believed that significant public action was something admirable and worthy of fame and honour. And the argument was that if that common understanding ever failed, then there would be danger for the freedom of the society. Second, there is this common recognition that the laws by which we organize our life are something admirable. That again is part of the shared understanding of the good. But third, what we have here is not just a general conviction that the public and laws follow this model. This model also incorporates the common recognition of this. But now once we take that under consideration, we see that something else has entered the picture, because this model of society incorporates the sense that citizens with a particular history, a particular condition and particular institutional forms are bound together in one such enterprise. In other words, this ethos does not just incorporate a general belief that free societies are a good thing, a belief that anybody could hold – and which may be now held by many in northern Moscow, or southern Santiago. To have a viable society requires not just that I and others think it is a good thing, but that we come to a common recognized understanding that we have launched a particular common enterprise of this sort, and this creates a particular bond around this society, this tradition, this history.

This raises two issues. There are two ways in which this kind of society seems to run against the Dworkin-type liberalism or any type of liberalism that makes the right pre-eminent alone over the good. There seems first to be some common sense of what the good life is, and second, it seems to require not just that citizens have a strong sense of the appropriate universal ethical principles like freedom, equality and fairness, but also that they have a strong moral allegiance to this particular bonding which has come about in their society, whether it be their institutions, their history or their tradition. Now this second feature calls for a common allegiance to the particular, and this centrality of the particular is one of the most important issues raised by Hegel in his concept of *Sittlichkeit*.[4] This is one of the things that distinguishes ethical life from morality. Hegel talks in paradoxical formulations about the obligations of ethical life, where we are obliged to bring about what already is. This is the kind of obligation we have under *Sittlichkeit* or ethical life, by virtue of being members of one of the ongoing bonded communities of common life and common freedom. As pure individuals outside of any such going entity, that is in southern Santiago or northern Moscow and so on, we are bound by *Moralität* and we can have *Moralisch* obligations there. In some cases, these may even drive us to dream about a totally different society. But that is not the kind of obligation we have under *Sittlichkeit*, which presupposes this common existing entity.

So we have here, as it were, a cross between two kinds of distinction:

one between those goods that are purely sought by individuals as against goods that are sought by the community together, and the other between a morality of purely universal principles and a morality which is tied up with obligations to a particular community. These are two ways in which a viable free society in civic humanist terms must differ from a society purely based on the right according to the liberal outlook today. Now what I think is interesting in Hegel, beyond his being another member of this long tradition of civic humanism, is his way of formulating the mainline humanist argument that a free society cannot remain a free society without these elements of bonding. I think there are two things that are extremely interesting and insightful. One is this way of making a distinction between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*,[5] between ethical right and morality, which shows the importance of bonding to a particular, and the other is that Hegel has not just drawn this point about the impossibility of maintaining the free society without common bonding out of a reasoned observation of history and society, as for instance de Tocqueville does very brilliantly. But Hegel has connected it with some of the most fundamental features of human right and of what the new, modern subject is. I think it is fascinating to see how this works out in Hegel.

For instance, you can see that this worked out in one way in the very famous dialectic of the master and the slave,[6] where Hegel makes the point of some inner link between self-consciousness and recognition. I think you can reconstitute the argument behind that fundamental link by combining two philosophical points which together produce this connection. One is that counting as a person is intrinsic to being a person. Recognizing persons is inseparable from being obliged to treat them in a certain way: according them respect, giving them rights to speak, in modern terms. But even looking at our lives monologically, we seek a sense of worth. We cannot construe our lives narratively in a way which makes sense of them without incorporating this issue of their worth. Thus we may conclude from either of these ways that one can say that persons exist only in a certain space of evaluation. That is one point.

The second point that comes together with this Hegelian insight that personhood involves recognition is that the space of evaluation of the person's existence is intrinsically and inseparably a public space. We come back to this very important strong sense of the public. Hegel's underlying argument should perhaps be constructed in the following way. The link between the space of evaluation for which persons exist and public space is that this kind of evaluation requires language. That is, the issue of the evaluation of persons could not arise for us unless we could in some way articulate the evaluation or give expression to it. The issue only arises for language animals. But language does not arise monologically. It arises in conversation or between people. Each of us is inducted into language by conversation with others so that the language I speak is not at first

my language but our language. We learn the words that can express evaluation by applying them, and we learn to apply them in conversation. So we learn them out of common application, and that is why, to use Wittgenstein's expression, we have to agree to some degree in judgments. I become a person by entering the space of value, and this space of value is one elaborated in a common language; so I cannot flourish as a person if this space of value is so laid out as to negate or denigrate me.

In fact, this is the point which underlies the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave. To be persons, we crave recognition and we are ready to fight for it, but the fighting over it is in itself a contradictory action because both the acknowledgement that we need recognition and the media or language which sustains the common space of evaluation that allows recognition has to be constituted by conversation between us. What powers the master–slave dialectic, and drives it on, is that the very struggle to gain recognition is fated to self-frustration because it can never be properly achieved until we achieve the kind of community described in the passage which ends this section of the *Phenomenology*: a society where the I is a we and we is an I.[7] Thus Hegel has anchored the civic humanist reflection of the importance of common valuation for a free society in a philosophical anthropology linking personhood to the very nature of language.

Coming back now to the issue of how this applies to our modern liberal society, let me go back to the practice of contemporary societies. How do we see the contemporary American republic in the light of both of Dworkin's liberalism on the one hand, and the humanist-derived sense of the importance of ethical life on the other? Interestingly, in the contemporary American polity there is a partial recognition of, or embodying of, this civic humanist requirement and a partial distancing of self. Let us go back to the two points which emerged from the civic humanist tradition as critical of the Dworkin-type liberal position. First, there has to be a common sense of the good life, which directly contradicts Dworkin's provisions. And second, the requirements of a free society according to humanists differs from the liberal one, in that it requires not just the wide acceptance of universal ehtical principles but the strong sense of bonding to a particular set of institutions. Now it seems to be that whether or not the contemporary American public involves an embodiment of point number one, that is a strong common sense of the good life, it certainly embodies point number two, that is a very strong attachment to particular institutions; and I would argue that the civic humanists' case for the essential nature of this is wonderfully illustrated by recent American history. The public reactions to Watergate and the Iran-Contra affair were excellent illustrations. The reactions displayed a deep sense of respect for and allegiance to a particular political community – not just to the general principles but to the principles as embodied in a particular

set of institutions and traditions. These were terribly important to the identity of a lot of people and therefore made them react in anger when they saw how their President had acted. Their reaction had an extremely important political effect and goes on having an important political effect, in preserving whatever these institutions preserve, the kind of freedoms and immunities they embody. Now it is also clear that that kind of reaction, powered as it is by a particular bonding of patriotism rather than simply by widespread acceptance of totally unconnected universal principles, also poses a danger, and opponents of Hegel have made this point again and again. This criticism is not without merit; this kind of patriotism can lead to blind actions that override the ethic of the public life. The paradox of one Oliver North is especially striking: he possesses a tremendous love of country that could take the form of subverting all the principles of that country. This is not a surprising or unusual phenomenon; it is something that exists everywhere and can be a very dangerous force. I do not deny its danger, but the fact that it also takes the form of a bulwark of freedom seems to me to be undeniable. But there is one feature of this allegiance which does not entirely fit the civic humanist tradition. That is, that the reaction of the American public in defence of the laws seemed directed more as a repository of right, of the rule of law and equal treatment, than as a repository of citizen self-rule. By citizen self-rule, I mean something rather strong and special. I do not just mean the existence of parties and elections, whereby the forms of democracy are built in as part of the rule of law. I mean something more subtle but very important. I am talking of a political culture, where political participation in the process of making a majority, of forming a government, of ruling, would be rather devalued and seen as an activity of secondary importance. But what the serious people who want to act as guardians of the law or adjuncts to guardians of the law would consider important would be judicial action, retrieving rights. Indeed, some consider appointing the Supreme Court justices to be the most important function of the American President.

This is a kind of participation which is very adversarial and looks on political power as 'them' against 'us', and looks on political action as the retrieving of rights or the retrieving of certain important, very circumscribed goals. So one would have a pattern of political action which is either punctually aimed at a particular goal and/or generally oppositional. That is, its stance would be that the citizens should defend themselves against government as something beyond them, almost an enemy. The objective is to make sure that, among the other bad things, government does not affect this particular interest or that particular group.

There is a pattern of political action here which would turn on the legal process of defending rights rather than the representative institutions as a medium of collective self-rule. Citizen dignity, therefore, would be

defined more and more as the capacity to retrieve one's rights, either through the courts, through oppositional campaigns or through the single-issue type of political organization. And correspondingly, the sense of participation in the political process, that is being elected and sharing in power, tends to be devalued. This is different, in an an important sense, from the classical civic humanist position in that it would have dropped what I call point one, the general understanding that participation, ruling and being ruled in turn, was something valuable as a form of life. That would disappear. One would still have something important from the civic humanist tradition, namely, some sense of commonly valued institutions and the laws – that is those centred around the treatment of right, but not the classical notion of participation.

This gives rise to several questions. Is that what is happening here? If it is, is that a good thing? If it is, is it a viable form of defending freedom in the long run? I mean viable for the defence of freedom. Now, on the other side, there is a sense that there is such a thing as participating in rule, not necessarily just as a politician or in government, but as a member of a large-membership mass party trying to elect a government, or as a member of some citizens' group linked in some way to government, or as a worker in a party trying to elect a form of government. There is a sense that this is a valid thing to do, an admirable mode of life. In other words, a sense that citizen dignity partly connects with being connected to rule.

Here are two ways of perceiving the role of law in politics. They both lie within this basically Hegelian civic humanist framework. What they both exclude is a picture of a society run purely by invisible-hand mechanisms. This is a formula which is seen as quite unviable in this framework. There needs to be some strong sense of common values, and this has to be particularized and bonded to a particular people in history. But, in my perhaps overdrawn distinction, we have a rather different picture of that around which the bonding occurs, and the difficulty is that it is hard to combine the two. That is, the more the place of one grows, the more it can constrain or take the place of the other. And questions arise, not only as to which of these is the better but, more fundamentally, whether the one organized around judicial review is viable in the long term. I have questions about whether a society organized around common values and a common sense of the rights, and a rather adversarial attitude towards the legal process, is viable in the long term.

Now, Hegel would have had no difficulty deciding this question. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes: 'The Many . . . are of course something connected, but they are connected only as an aggregate, a formless mass whose commotion and activity could therefore only be elementary, irrational, barbarous, and frightful.'[8] That was his view. It is the point where one can see how the whole Hegelian model is flawed. A Hegelian

model, as a model of critical society, is flawed by its Fichtean roots. I think this goes for everything good Hegel did in the way of overturning epistemology and atomism. His argument was powered by a fundamental concept of subject/object identity, which he gets from Fichte, and which has some roots in Rousseau. It is a model for a kind of unity of society which, in the end, gives no place to the agon, to competition, to unresolvable differences. That is why Hegel can make these kinds of remarks, not about the wild West in the 1870s, but about even well-ordered societies that have elections from territorial constituencies. That is why he can make these kind of remarks about institutions that work through checks and balances, which work in adversarial form, and not simply in a form that brings them together. Hegel had this completely unrealistic view about how representative institutions could work simply in a one-way direction to bring people in and create a consensus, rather than to be the arena in which deep dissensions can be worked out in a way that nevertheless helps to bond to a common allegiance. I think that is one way of framing one of the great realizations of liberal democracies when they work – that they manage to achieve this. That, of course, means that in order to reconstruct the whole Hegelian synthesis, you have to do what he did; one has to go down as deep as he did, to the roots of all of this, in a conception of human being rooted in the language and in the way that we relate to language. I think it can be done, but Hegel offers us this very difficult legacy. Hegel gives us an unparalleled depth of understanding and philosophic underpinnings for posing these questions about the nature of a free society, and I think he lays to rest the false view that one could have a society that is organized entirely around invisible-hand mechanisms. Moreover, by posing these issues and showing, I think, the tremendous importance of the bonding around a particular history and tradition, Hegel allows us to pose the more finely grained issues which arise in comparing a society which defines citizen dignity in terms of retrieving one's rights with a society which identifies citizen dignity with participating in rule. In all of that I think Hegel is tremendously revealing and helpful. But, at the same time, his view suffers from a great inadequacy, in that the ultimate metaphysical idea that in Hegel's magnificently consistent way runs through and informs his whole work is a conception of subject/object identity, which is both metaphysical and incredible, and I think in the end a very bad model for a political society. So, in a sense, we have very good reason to use Hegel, but we have to use him with great care.

Notes

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1 Dworkin, 'Liberalism', in *Public and Private Morality* 127 (S. Hampshire ed. 1978).

2 If you want to go to the Greek, this is what ε'λευθέρια is in one of its meanings.

3 The first and most prominent of these theorists is Adam Smith. See A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (E. Canaan ed. 1937). Hegel reinterprets Smith's invisible hand as the cunning of reason. G. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* §199. (T. Knox trans. 1952) (1821) (hereinafter *Philosophy of Right*).

4 ' "Sittlichkeit" refers to the moral obligations I have to an ongoing community of which I am a part.' C. Taylor, *Hegel* 376 (1975).

5 For a more detailed explanation of the difference between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, see Taylor, supra note 4, at 376–8.

6 See Taylor, supra note 4, at 153–7.

7 See G. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* 241–67 (J. Baillie trans. 1967).

8 *Philosophy of Right*, supra note 3, para. 303.

Philosophy of History

Hegel's political theory and philosophy of history

Philip J. Kain

I

Hegel's historical and political thought can best be understood if we understand its relationship to Rousseau's political theory and Kant's philosophy of history.

Hegel's conception of the modern state closely resembles Rousseau's ideal community, which was based upon rational freedom realized through a general will and reinforced by custom and tradition which shaped the character and interests of the citizens. However, Rousseau's community was utopian – it could not be realized in the modern world. It was incompatible with commerce and trade which promote particular interest and thus corrupt custom and erode the general will. These matters will be discussed in section III.

To explain the possibility of the ideal state in the modern world, Hegel turns to Kant's philosophy of history, where commerce, trade, and conflicting particular interests themselves lead to what morality – the categorical imperative or the general will – would demand. Kant's ideal state, however, completely lacks custom, tradition and community – what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*. These matters will be discussed in Section II.

Hegel's goal, then, is to combine three things: (1) rational freedom of the sort realized through a general will or categorical imperative, (2) a theory of historical development in which conflicting particular interests lead to a moral society, and (3) custom, tradition, or *Sittlichkeit*. To do this Hegel will have to reject certain aspects of the thought of Rousseau and Kant, and he will have to explain how custom, tradition and community instead of being corrupted by particular interests can come to be compatible with them. The key to this will be Hegel's concept of spirit. These matters will be discussed in Section IV. Let us begin with Kant.

II

In the 'Idea for a Universal History', Kant claims that individuals motivated by inclinations, desires and particular interests, nevertheless further, without realizing it, a common but unknown purpose. The key to this historical purposiveness is what Kant calls 'unsocial sociability'. Humans have an unsocial propensity towards self-interest, but they also have a social propensity to associate with others in society. These two factors produce competition, conflict and even war. However, competition and selfishness also drive us to accomplish things, and they drive us towards the fullest development of our powers and capacities. This development, for Kant, will eventually lead to a society of peace and morality.[1]

So also, for Kant, there is an unsocial sociability between nations. The unsocial assertion of national self-interest drives nations towards aggression and war. But there is also an important form of sociability between nations – their concern with commerce and trade. As conflicts and wars become more destructive and expensive, they come into conflict with trade. As nations become more commercially interdependent, war poses an ever greater threat to the smooth functioning of the international market. Other nations will intervene to prevent war, and thus, for Kant, we move towards peace, justice and a league of nations.[2]

For Kant, there are two forces at work in history. The first is the conflict of particular interests. The second is morality. And both, for Kant, lead to the very same end – peace, justice and a league of nations. Conflicts and wars, Kant says, are leading towards what moral reflection would have demanded from the start (UH, 18–19. PP, 112–13).

For Kant, the categorical imperative requires us to act only on maxims which we could will to be universal laws.[3] Morality is based upon reason, not interest. We must rationally analyse our maxims – ask if they can be universalized without contradiction – in order to separate our interests or inclinations about a particular act from our abstract rational assessment of what is moral in general. Only if we follow reason are we free, self-determined and moral. If we act upon our interests, we are determined heteronomously by natural forces and we are not free.[4]

The categorical imperative would demand just laws, an end to wars and a league of nations (PP, 100). We could not will to universalize war, unjust laws and international lawlessness. Moreover, the other force at work in history drives us to the very same point that morality does. Both morality and the conflict of particular interests converge towards the same end – one consciously, the other unconsciously (UH, 18–19. PP, 111–13).

The notion that conflicting self-interests lead towards what morality demands Kant gets, I think, from Adam Smith. In a market economy, for Smith, self-seeking not only produces a common good, but it does so

more effectively than if individuals had consciously and cooperatively sought this good. It produces a national capital – a *common good* – through an 'invisible hand', that is behind our backs and despite our intentions.[5]

For Kant too we find such an invisible hand operating within society:

> many say a republic would have to be a nation of angels, because men with their selfish inclinations are not capable of a constitution of such sublime form. But precisely with these inclinations nature comes to the aid of the general will established on reason. . . . Thus it is only a question of a good organization of the state . . . whereby the powers of each selfish inclination are so arranged in opposition that one moderates or destroys the ruinous effect of the other. The consequence for reason is the same as if none of them existed, and man is forced to be a good citizen even if not a morally good person.
>
> (PP, 112)

While Hegel, unlike Kant, does not think that world history is leading to peace, a league of nations or international law,[6] nevertheless, Hegel, very much like Kant, relies on an invisible hand argument both in his philosophy of history and in his theory of civil society. For Hegel, particular interest or passion is the active force in history which gives rise to the universal. Human passions and the universal Idea are the warp and the woof of world history.[7] Hegel says,

> The particular interests of passion cannot . . . be separated from the realization of the universal. . . . Particular interests contend with one another. . . . But it is from this very conflict and destruction of particular things that the universal emerges, and it remains unscathed itself. For it is not the universal Idea which enters into opposition, conflict, and danger; it keeps itself in the background, untouched and unharmed, and sends forth the particular interests of passion to fight, and wear themselves out in its stead. It is what we may call the cunning of reason that it sets the passions to work in its service, so that the agents by which it gives itself existence must pay the penalty and suffer the loss.
>
> (*IPH*, 89)

World history, for Hegel, occurs as the universal Idea is realized through the conflict of particular interests – a conflict which produces effects quite different from what the individuals consciously intended to accomplish (*IPH*, 82, 75).

So also, in his discussion of civil society in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel, much as Kant, follows Adam Smith. Civil society is a system of

economic interdependence where self-seeking unconsciously produces the satisfaction of the needs of all. Competitive self-seeking produces a common capital from which each struggles to gain their share. Conflicting particular interests lead to the universal. Moreover, for Hegel, a state is well constituted when the private interests of the citizens coincide with the general end of the state (*PR*, 127, 129–30. *IPH*, 73).

So far, the views of Hegel and Kant are quite similar. Now we must look to the differences. In the first place, for Hegel, we cannot say that there are *two different* forces at work in history – the conflict of particular interests and morality – as for Kant. 'The particular interests of passion *cannot . . . be separated from the realization of the universal*' (*IPH*, 89; my italics). We can begin to understand Hegel's views on this matter if we look to the section of the *Phenomenology* entitled 'Virtue and the Way of the World'. Most commentators on the *Phenomenology* think that this section refers to Don Quixote. None of them, that I am aware of, see what it really refers to, which is so very clearly Kant's philosophy of history.

In this section, Hegel's description of 'virtue' clearly indicates that he has Kant's ethics in mind. Virtue is the consciousness that law is essential and that individuality – which is to say, particular interest – must be sacrificed to the universal. Virtue wills to accomplish the good which is not yet actual; the universal is an 'ought' which must be realized. It can be realized only through virtue's nullifying of individuality.[8] For the 'way of the world', on the other hand, individuality takes *itself* to be essential, and it pursues self-interest. It seeks its own pleasure and enjoyment, and in doing so it subordinates the universal to itself. For Kant, both morality and the conflict of particular interests converge towards the same universal end. So also, for Hegel, the way of the world, through the conflict of particular interests, achieves the universal – the same universal that virtue seeks (*PS*, 228–9, 235). For Kant, it was morality's task to guide the historical conflict of particular interests and to hasten it towards its end. For Hegel, virtue too attempts to assist the way of the world to realize the universal. At this point, however, Hegel's disagreement with Kant begins. Hegel argues that, in fact, virtue's assistance is *unnecessary*; the way of the world is quite capable of realizing the universal on its own. Virtue's assistance is a sham (*PS*, 230–2). Virtue wants to bring the good into existence by the sacrifice of particular interest. But the conflict of particular interests is what actually realizes the universal. Virtue wants to realize the universal as something that *ought to be* rather than as something which *is*. The way of the world is our first dim view in the *Phenomenology* of *Sittlichkeit* – morality which appears not merely as an ought, but which is. Hegel says:

Virtue in the ancient world has its own definite sure meaning, for it

> had in the *spiritual substance* of the nation a foundation full of meaning, and for its purpose an actual good already in existence. Consequently, too, it was not directed against the actual world as against something *generally perverted*, and against a 'way of the world'. But the virtue we are considering has its being *outside of the spiritual substance*, it is an unreal virtue, a virtue in imagination and name only, which lacks that substantial content.
>
> (*PS*, 234; the last italics are mine)

Thus, for Hegel, we must drop the idea that virtue exists only as a principle, an ought, which as yet has no actual existence and which is brought into existence through the sacrifice of individuality, particular interest, or passion. Hegel's objection to Kantian morality, or 'virtue', is that it is abstract, outside the world, an ought, and it believes that only it can realize morality.[9] It has severed itself from the concrete actual world of interest and passion, and it faces it as an other. From this superior position it wants to direct the world. Instead, morality must be rooted in the world. Or to put this another way, the point Hegel is making here is that Kant's philosophy of history and his ethics are written from the perspective of individual consciousness – the perspective that there are only individual consciousnesses. Morality, for Kant, is a matter of individual will abstracted from the concrete actual world. Certainly, for Kant, inclinations and interests, which are part of the actual world of natural causality, are to be carefully separated and excluded from the realm of the individual moral will if the individual is to be self-determined and thus free. This separation is what Hegel objects to. Kant has no notion of spirit or *Sittlichkeit*, which are beginning to emerge here in the *Phenomenology*. *Sittlichkeit* is morality embedded in a concrete spiritual world. For Hegel, virtue and the way of the world, particular interest and the universal, morality and the concrete world are not separate opposed realities externally related to each other. They are internally related as parts of a single spiritual reality which already exists, not something which merely ought to be realized. For Hegel, individual consciousness is the internalization of the social world, and the social world is the outcome of the actions of individual consciousnesses. Each develops in interaction with the other, and each transforms the other. They are two parts of one spiritual unity.

Hegel agrees with the Kantian and Smithian notion that a conflict of particular interests leads to the universal. What Hegel does not accept is that this can be understood merely at the level of individual consciousness. It must be understood at the level of spirit. Spirit explains how individual interest – the concrete way of the world – is connected to virtue. This will become clearer in section IV, but here we can at least say that conflict between particular interests gives rise to a set of

institutions, a world, which comes to have a life of its own, and which reacts back upon and moulds those individual consciousnesses and thus leads them to virtue. Particular interests and virtue are not two eternally separate realms external to one another. They are internally related as two interacting parts enclosed within a single spiritual unity, and each produces the other. Virtue is simply mistaken in thinking itself independent and outside of this spiritual reality, superior to it, and thus able to guide particular interests from above. In fact, for Hegel, we cannot guide history at all as Kant thinks we can. History is not a matter of individual will, but of spirit. Individuals are unconscious tools of world spirit. Moreover, there is no ought that the individual will can independently set out to realize. Morality already exists as this spiritual unity which encloses us and is our very being. Hegel's task is to reconcile us to what *is* by allowing us to understand correctly what *is*. His aim is to transform our understanding of reality so that we accept it, not to transform reality in accordance with an ought (*PR*, 11–12. *IPH*, 170–1).

To understand this critique of Kant more clearly, we must notice that Hegel distinguishes between two forms of morality – *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*. *Moralität* begins with Socrates and reaches its high point in Kant. *Moralität* is individual, rational and reflective morality based upon individual autonomy and personal conviction. One must rationally decide what is moral and do it because it is moral – because our rationality tells us that it is the right thing to do. This rational and reflective component is absent in *Sittlichkeit*. *Sittlichkeit* is best represented in the Greek *polis* before the rise of Socratic *Moralität*. *Sittlichkeit* is ethical behaviour grounded in custom and tradition and developed through habit and imitation in accordance with the objective laws of the community. Personal reflection and analysis have little to do with *Sittlichkeit* (*IPH*, 97). *Sittlichkeit* is ethical life built into one's character, attitudes and feelings.

Furthermore, *Moralität* involves an 'ought' – morality ought to be realized. This 'ought' is also absent from *Sittlichkeit*. For it, morality is not something we ought to realize, something we ought to be. Morality exists – it is. Morality is already embedded in our customs, traditions, character, attitudes and feelings. Here there is no opposition between particular interest and the universal. There is no opposition between subject and object. The objective ethical order exists in, is actualized in, is the essence of, the subject (*PR* 109. *PS*, 212–16).

What Hegel wants for the modern world is neither traditional *Sittlichkeit* nor modern *Moralität*. He wants a synthesis of *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität* which, though at times confusing, he also calls *Sittlichkeit*. This higher *Sittlichkeit* combines the rational and reflective side of *Moralität* with the transcendence of the ought characteristic of *Sittlichkeit*. Rational reflective morality is concretely embedded in the customs, traditions, character and

feelings of individuals. We have a reflective consciousness of the ethical substance (*PS*, 216).

Sittlichkeit without *Moralität* is inadequate for Hegel. So also, Hegel rejects Kantian *Moralität* without *Sittlichkeit*. This was implied in 'Virtue and the Way of the World', but it becomes clearer in the following sections of the *Phenomenology*, where Hegel goes on to argue that Kantian *Moralität* shorn of *Sittlichkeit*, in fact, is impossible. He argues that one cannot discover one's moral obligation in Kantian fashion simply by analysing abstract principles to see if they are universal and non-contradictory. For example, private property as well as its opposite – common ownership – are equally universalizable and non-contradictory. Without *Sittlichkeit* – without an immediately given, objective, ethical substance embedded in custom and tradition which actually *is* rather that merely ought to be – it is impossible to discover through analysis one's moral obligation. *Moralität* gets its content from *Sittlichkeit* (*PS*, 257–61. *PR*, 36, 90. *IPH*, 80).

Moreover, *Moralität* without *Sittlichkeit* would leave us with an inadequate form of freedom. For Kant, individual subjectivity alone is free. Individuals are free when practical reason determines their action. The individual, however, is not necessarily free to realize this moral action. The objective world may well present obstacles to the carrying out of the action, without, for Kant, affecting the individual's moral freedom in the least (*F*, 10, 16. *CPrR*, 71). For Kant, such empirical factors, whether they be obstacles or aids, must be completely ignored. They are irrelevant to freedom. Nor do feelings or inclinations play a role here. They need not support the action; nor is our freedom affected if they are opposed to the moral action.[10] For Hegel, on the other hand, freedom is realized only when the objective external world and our feelings fit, agree with and support the subjective rational freedom of the individual. Laws and institutions, feelings and customs, as well as the rationality of the individual must form a single organic spiritual unity. Thus, for Hegel, freedom requires three things: (1) that the individual be self-determined by universal and rational principles, (2) that rationality have been objectified in the laws and institutions of the state such that in obeying civil laws we obey the laws of our own reason, and (3) that interests, feelings and customs have been moulded so as to agree with and support these rational laws such that particular interests are satisfied and yet lead to the universal.[11]

For Kant, the possibility of freedom required that the transcendental self not be located in the natural, causally determined, phenomenal world. Another – a noumenal realm – was required. A sphere apart from the natural sphere was necessary as the source of self-determined, free action (*F*, 69–73. *CPrR*, 28, 50). In rejecting the existence of an unknown thing-in-itself,[12] Hegel rejects the existence of this separate noumenal realm.

Rather than locate a transcendental self in a realm apart (as virtue was opposed to the way of the world), he denies that there are such different realms. Instead, there is a single spiritual realm split into two parts – an individual subjective realm and an objective substantial realm. These two sides react against each other and each produces the other. Ultimately the natural objective element is absorbed into the conscious subjective element. In this way the object is no longer alien or other. Individual action and interests give rise to an objective worldly reality which then turns upon the individuals, moulds them, and lifts them to the level of universality. The subject does not confront the object as a heteronomous other. The object is the outcome of the subject's own activity, the realization of the subject's essence, and thus the object is compatible with the subject's freedom. The subject is not externally related to the object, but internally related to it as its own essence.

Individuals work on their world through history and transform it to fit themselves (*IPH*, 64), just as the world transforms individuals so that they conform to it. In confronting their world, individuals confront and discover themselves. For Hegel, they confront their own rationality objectified in the world. This fit between the subjective rationality of the individual and the objective rationality of the world, when supported by custom, tradition and feeling, is the basis of *Sittlichkeit*. To pursue this further, we must now turn to Rousseau.

III

Rousseau wants to design an ideal state in which the general will can manifest itself. It can do so, given four conditions which Rousseau lays out in the *Social Contract*, but not neatly all in one place. The four conditions are the following: (1) All citizens must vote as individuals on all questions or laws. (2) All questions put to these citizens must have an abstract and universal form; they must not name a particular person or fact. (3) The question put must always and only be, 'what is the general will on this matter?'. You must not address the citizens as individuals and ask them what their particular interests are. (4) All laws must be rigorously and equally enforced, and everyone must realize when they are voting that this will be the case.[13]

The point here is to address only an individual's abstract, reflective, rational interest, not their personal, particular, selfish interest. Citizens are made to reflect upon what it would be like if everyone always acted in a specific way. We get them to consider the action as a universal and necessary principle – as a categorical imperative, in Kant's terminology.

If they do so, even thieves would vote against theft. If we were only to address the particular interest of thieves, we might well get some quite

convincing justifications of those particular acts of theft. But if we address the abstract, reflective, rational interest, even of thieves; if we ask whether in general, in all cases, everyone should be allowed to steal by laws which are rigorously and equally enforced for all; then even thieves would vote against theft.

The difference between Rousseau and Kant is that for Rousseau the citizens are expected to vote their interest in the general abstract case – their long-term interest as citizens of a community rather than their immediate interest as particular persons. For Kant, we must avoid interest altogether. Hegel, who, as we have already seen, is critical of Kant's abstract opposition of morality to particular interest, in this respect would be closer to Rousseau.

Furthermore, for Rousseau, the general will must be reinforced by what Hegel would call *Sittlichkeit*. Citizens are only free if the customs which shape inclination and feeling accord with the general will and reason. Rousseau says, 'To these . . . laws is added . . . the most important of all; which is not engraved on marble or bronze, but in the hearts of the citizens . . . I am speaking of mores, customs, and especially of opinion – a part of the laws unknown to our political theorists, but on which the success of all the others depends.'[14]

Custom and tradition would be reinforced, for Rousseau, by a civil religion which combines simple, inner, personal commitment with a sentiment of sociability and respect for laws. And these healthy customs, traditions and public opinion would be maintained by a censorial tribunal which, though incapable of creating, changing or re-establishing customs and traditions, merely declares what they are in an attempt to preserve them and to slow down their corruption (*SC*, 123–31).

For Rousseau, there is a tendency for the customs and traditions of any community to become corrupted. Rousseau argues in the *Discourse on Inequality* that in simple, healthy, egalitarian communities, as soon as agriculture and metallurgy develop and surplus production occurs, society is plunged into inequality, conflict of interests and the corruption of customs.[15] Moreover, Rousseau thinks that once healthy customs have been corrupted, all is lost. They can never be revived (*SC*, 70. DI, 80). Wealth, unequal property and commerce are the main causes of this corruption. They promote self-interest and erode the citizen's commitment to the public good. They corrupt custom, tradition and patriotism, which then will no longer be able to reinforce the general will. Moreover, they can even erode the general will directly. They will make it all the more difficult for the citizens to transcend their immediate interests and to concern themselves with abstract questions, or to ask 'what is the common good?' or 'what is the general will?' instead of 'what do I want?' (DI, 199–200).

Thus Rousseau is a utopian. He does not think his ideal state is possible

in the modern world. It is incompatible with commerce, trade, particular interest, and the corruption they produce. And once customs and traditions have been corrupted, all is lost. They cannot be revived. For a decent society to be possible, healthy customs and traditions must simply be given in a traditional and pre-modern society.

Hegel certainly wants a state which realizes the universal or the general will, and he wants it reinforced by custom, tradition and *Sittlichkeit*. But he also wants such a state to be possible in the modern world and thus compatible with wealth, commerce and trade. He therefore needs a theory that will explain how custom and tradition, without becoming corrupt, can develop and be maintained in a changing modern society involving commerce and trade.

To understand this theory, we must notice that Hegel differs from Rousseau in that for him customs and traditions are not simply given conditions – the groundwork – upon which the institutions of a state are to be established. Rather, *Sittlichkeit*, that is custom and tradition, the feelings and attitudes of the citizens, are continually being *produced* by social and political institutions. Patriotism, for example, which Hegel sees as a sentiment that 'habitually recognizes that the community is one's substantive groundwork and end', is 'simply a product of the institutions subsisting in the state' (*PR*, 163–4). It thus follows that different states or a state as it changes historically will produce different customs and traditions. This production requires that mind pass through a process of education (*Bildung*), and this education is a discipline (*PR*, 165). For example, in discussing the rise of modern Germany out of the Middle Ages, Hegel says:

> The two iron rods which were the instrument of this discipline were the Church and serfdom. The Church drove the 'Heart' to desperation – made Spirit pass through the severest bondage. . . . In the same way serfdom, which made a man's body not his own, but the property of another, dragged humanity through all the barbarism of slavery. . . . It was not so much *from* slavery as *through* slavery that humanity was emancipated . . . it is from this intemperate and ungovernable state of volition that the discipline in question emancipated him.[16]

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel puts it in more general terms: 'Mind attains its actuality only by creating a dualism within itself, by submitting itself to physical needs and the chain of these external necessities, and so imposing on itself this barrier and this finitude, and finally by educating (*bildet*) itself inwardly even when under this barrier until it overcomes it and attains its objective reality in the finite.'[17] In the modern state, civil society is one of the most important institutions which provide this discipline or education. In the first place, it produces in individuals the habit

of work. At the same time, it makes individuals dependent upon one another for the satisfaction of their needs. Finally, as we have seen, it turns self-seeking into a contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of all such that self-interest leads to the universal (*PR*, 129–30).

But still, how can commerce, trade and wealth, which are generated in civil society, avoid corrupting custom and tradition and become compatible with *Sittlichkeit*? Hegel is certainly aware of Rousseau's argument that particular interest destroys custom and tradition. In fact, in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel's general picture of the historical course of nations is quite similar to Rousseau's. For Hegel, nations in their youth create their own ethics, customs and religion, and individuals assimilate themselves to them. The nation actively struggles to realize itself in the actual world and to make itself what it is. Once this has been accomplished, the nation starts to become inactive, self-indulgent, and it stagnates. At this point, '[i]ndividual interests seize control of the powers and resources which were formerly dedicated to the whole'. 'Individuals withdraw into themselves and pursue their own ends, and this . . . is the nation's undoing.' As the nation declines, a new higher principle emerges, but always in *another* nation (*IPH*, 58–63). Thus, for Hegel much as for Rousseau, particular interests cause the downfall and corruption of nations.

But in the *Philosophy of Right*, while Hegel admits that particular interest or subjectivity destroyed the ancient world, he nevertheless insists that particular interest is an essential part of freedom (*PR*, 10, 123, 160. *IPH*, 70), and he claims that the 'principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself' (*PR*, 161). In other words, the key here is that wealth, commerce and trade as well as the particular interests they promote do not ultimately erode custom, tradition and *Sittlichkeit*, as Rousseau argued, because in civil society particular interest is not only compatible with the universal, but actively generates the universal. Rousseau could not see this.

Hegel recognizes that customs and traditions change as they are moulded by changing social and political institutions, and he develops a theory which allows us to understand this change without concluding that it will lead to corruption. He takes up Kant's philosophy of history and Adam Smith's concept of an invisible hand to show that particular interests and the customs and traditions formed by the discipline of civil society lead unconsciously to the common good. Far from being opposed to the common good and leading to corruption as for Rousseau, they lead to and reinforce the universal and thus are perfectly compatible with *Sittlichkeit*.

We have seen that Hegel objects to Kantian morality because it was abstract – cut off from the concrete world. He instead wants a morality rooted in the world of custom, tradition, feeling, passion and interest. He wants *Sittlichkeit*, not *Moralität*. In this respect he is like Rousseau. But, as we have also seen, Rousseau's ideal society is a utopia where healthy customs and traditions simply must be given and where wealth and particular interest are a main source of their corruption. Thus, Hegel also appeals to Kant's dynamic philosophy of history so that he can envision the realization of an ideal state that can be compatible with wealth, commerce and trade in the modern world. Hegel is able to make this very important connection between Kant and Rousseau because he is able to see two things: first, that given the socio-economic interdependence of each upon all, particular interests can lead to the universal, and second, that social institutions, especially civil society, through education and discipline, produce customs and traditions that reinforce the tendency of particular interests to realize the universal. Thus, this Kantian dynamic not only leads to the universal, but is now concrete, that is, tied up with particular interests, passions and activity which will produce a discipline that shapes customs and traditions as well as moulding feelings, sentiments and particular interests together with the universal common good.

Thus, we have three things: (1) morality which exists concretely in the world tied up with interests and passions. It exists there before us. We have *Sittlichkeit*, not an unrealized ought. (2) Yet this *Sittlichkeit* does not just have to be given or presupposed in utopian fashion as for Rousseau. It develops and is dynamic without becoming corrupted. And (3) it realizes the universal – the general will or the categorical imperative – not by a 'virtue' which exists outside the concrete but in and through concrete interests and individuality.

While Hegel certainly accepts that part of Rousseau's concept of the general will which holds that individual interests realize the universal, he is nevertheless quite critical of other aspects of Rousseau's concept of the general will. Hegel says that Rousseau

> takes the will only in a determinate form as the individual will, and he regards the universal will not as the absolutely rational element in the will, but only as a 'general' will which proceeds out of this individual will as out of a conscious will. The result is that he reduces the union of individuals in the state to a contract and therefore to something based on their arbitrary wills, their opinion, and their capriciously given express consent; and abstract reasoning proceeds to draw the logical inferences which destroy the absolutely divine principle of the state, together with its majesty and absolute authority.[18]

Most commentators misunderstand what Hegel is saying here. They think

he is criticizing Rousseau for understanding the general will as a particular will or the will of all.[19] Rousseau certainly does not do this, and Hegel is not claiming that he does. By 'individual wills', Hegel does not mean 'particular will'. Hegel is here making much the same sort of criticism of Rousseau that, as we saw in section II above, he made of Kant. Hegel is claiming that Rousseau understands the general will only from the perspective of individual consciousness – that for Rousseau only individual consciousnesses exist. Thus, for Rousseau, the general will is seen as the outcome of individual wills willing the common good rather than as the outcome of spirit. It follows from this that the individual wills must vote, that they are responsible for establishing the laws of the state, and thus that individuals rule. Hegel does not believe that all individuals should vote, and he certainly does not believe that they should rule.[20] He believes that this sort of thing led to the French Revolution. Moreover, while the individual will, for Rousseau, does realize the universal or general will, it sustains only an external relation to the general will much as virtue was external to the way of the world for Kant (*PS*, 358–9, *NL*, 85–9).

For Hegel to be able to reconcile the Kantian-Smithian principle of conflicting interests with Rousseauian custom, tradition and *Sittlichkeit*, self-interest must not be thought to produce a universal external to itself. Self-interest must be understood to sustain an internal relation to the universal as its own essence. It must implicitly be the universal. For Rousseau, particular interest is seen as external to the universal much as interest or inclination were seen as external to and thus incompatible with morality and freedom for Kant. Thus, for Rousseau, in a society in which particular interest is powerful, it will be impossible to achieve the universal – the general will. Particular interest will appear to erode the ethical basis of the state – it will erode custom, tradition and *Sittlichkeit*. Since particular interest and the universal are external and opposed to each other, the realization of one excludes the realization of the other. Particular interest is heteronomous. If viewed from the perspective of individual will where individuals sustain an external relation to the universal, Hegel agrees that one would have to come to the conclusion, much as Rousseau did, that particular interest erodes the universal. After all, Hegel himself admits that particular interest destroyed the ancient community. For Hegel, we must transcend the perspective of individual consciousness. Particular interests and the universal must be viewed as internally related – as two interacting elements of one spiritual reality, each moulding and forming the other. The universal must be seen as the essential manifestation of the individuals and individuals as disciplined by the universal. Then particular interests – wealth, trade and commerce – will not be seen as heteronomous. They will be seen as compatible with the universal and with freedom. Individuals will be related to their

own essence within *Sittlichkeit* and community. To make this clearer, however, we must say a good deal more about spirit as well as about its relationship to the state and to the individual citizens.

IV

Hegel's concept of spirit is most difficult to understand, let alone accept. In this section, I simply wish to explain this concept as clearly as possible without getting lost in details so that we can understand the political and historical views that depend upon it. I do not expect to persuade anyone of, nor am I persuaded by, every single thing involved here. At any rate, in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel discusses the rise of the modern state, and here we find a most important treatment of how spirit develops through alienation and estrangement (*PS*, 295–321). The development of the modern state and of culture occurs through a dialectical interaction that takes place between individual self-consciousness and the objective world. The very existence and development of this objective world, as well as the actualization and development of individual self-consciousness, depend upon the fact that self-consciousness alienates itself. Both sides here, which have become split and self-opposed, are in reality two sides of one spiritual unity. This fact, however, is not recognized by either side (*PS*, 294–5). Individual self-consciousness, for Hegel, alienates itself – it gives up its very essence – and thus objectifies itself in the world in the form of the state. The individual must alienate itself, in other words, it must serve, recognize and obey this state. The state only becomes actual by gaining this recognition, obedience and service. Through this objectification, individual self-consciousness gains concreteness and universality. It sets itself up as the universal spiritual substance (*PS*, 306ff.); the state, for Hegel, is nothing but the objectified essence – the recognition, service and sacrifice – of individual self-consciousness.

Individual self-consciousness creates its world through alienation, but at the same time its world takes on a life of its own and appears independent of individual self-consciousness. The objectified state power turns upon individuals. It becomes estranged. It dominates and controls them. It demands their obedience and recognition. In this way it moulds, disciplines and educates individuals. It demands that they conform themselves to this universal substance. As individual self-consciousness alienates itself, conforms itself, recognizes and serves this state, the state gains reality; it becomes universal, accepted and recognized. The more power this state gains, the more power it will have to mould and discipline the individual subjects and make them conform to this universal reality.

The subject is being constituted *by* and *as* a universal actual substance. The state gains in reality by embodying and institutionalizing the reality,

the essence, the service of the subjects. The subjects gain reality in being disciplined by, in conforming to and in being recognized by the universal reality of the state. The state is the subject's *own* reality – its essence, its *self*. At the same time, the state disciplines its subjects, educates them and lifts them to universality.

Both individual self-consciousness and the objective world of the state are at the same time parts of, and are constituting, a single spiritual unity – a single cultural world which is divided and self-opposed. But this unity goes unrecognized. Moreover, it must go unrecognized. If either side were to understand this mutual process, their development would falter. If individual self-consciousness saw that the state was its own alienated essence, it would cease to take the state as essential or to respect and serve it. If the state were to see its dependence on its subjects, the state would cease to take itself seriously. It would cease to take itself as essential and universal, and thus it would lose the power effectively to mould and discipline its subjects towards this universality (*PS*, 310–13).

What is occurring here, despite the fact that it is estranged and goes unrecognized, is that individual self-consciousness is being related to and rooted in the objective substantial world, not in the sense of being related heteronomously to something other and outside itself, but in the sense that the other, the objective, is its own essence, is itself objectified. Moreover, this other – which is its essence – is the universal. It has the universal and rational form of the state and its laws. Individual self-consciousness is thus establishing itself as the universal.

Ultimately, for Hegel, this estrangement and lack of recognition must be overcome. To be free, individual self-consciousness must come to see that the objective order is its universalized essence, and it must *consciously* will to serve and obey that universal, rational and objective order rather than be dominated and coerced to do so. This recognition, for Hegel, can only be gained after self-consciousness has been raised to the level of religion. As we see in following sections of the *Phenomenology*, religion, the relationship between individual self-consciousness and God which embraces the totality of things, develops through a dialectical process of interaction much like that between individual self-consciousness and the state. Each establishes and realizes the other (*PS*, 329–54, 453–78). Religion, for Hegel, is spirit's self-consciousness. Religion is the spirit of a people or of a culture reflecting upon itself, understanding itself, and committing itself to its mission and its truth. Only at this level do we gain a consciousness with sufficient scope and universality to see that individual self-consciousness and the objective state are simply two interacting parts of one spiritual unity, and only then can we *consciously* will to serve and obey that objective order which we see is our own essence.

In the last section of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel says that this 'alien-

ation of self-consciousness . . . has not merely a negative but a positive meaning . . . on the one hand self-consciousness itself alienates itself; for in doing so it establishes itself as object, or, by reason of the indivisible unity characterizing self-existence, sets up the object as itself'. This is the process of alienation establishing the state that we have just discussed. Hegel continues:

> there is also this other moment in the process, that self-consciousness has equally superseded this self-alienation and objectification, and is thus at home with itself in its otherness as such. . . . The cultivated self-consciousness, which has traversed the world of spirit in self-estrangement, has, through its self-alienation, produced the thing as its own self; it retains itself, therefore, still in the thing, and knows the thing to have no independence.[21]

Thus, when self-consciousness realizes that the object has no independence, that the object is the result of its own alienation, self-consciousness knows the object as itself and is no longer estranged. Estrangement, from the beginning, meant that the subject and the object were two sides of the same spiritual unity. They had become split and self-opposed such that this unity went unrecognized. When this unity is recognized, the estrangement is overcome. Even objectification has been overcome. The object no longer appears as an independent other. It appears as one's own essence.

Hegel's political aim is not to change or remake the world, but to reconcile us to it by allowing us to grasp it in thought fully and adequately (*PR*, 11–12). Estrangement is overcome by recognizing what it is. Individual self-consciousness does not cease to alienate itself; it simply recognizes that it alienates itself. It recognizes that the state is its own essence. It then continues to alienate itself, to serve and conform itself to the state, its own essence, but now it does so *consciously* and thus becomes free.

To understand these matters more completely, we must discuss their metaphysical and epistemological background. Hegel's Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia*, while interspersed with a discussion of other matters, attempts to review the history of philosophy. Hegel indicates the strengths and weaknesses of past philosophical systems and indicates what in them must be preserved as philosophy develops. Later philosophical systems, for Hegel, are always the outcome of previous philosophical systems (*L*, 23). Hegel certainly views his own system this way.

For Hegel, the strength of traditional (pre-Kantian) metaphysics, and what must be preserved from it, is its lack of any antithesis between subject and object. Traditional metaphysics believes that it brings universal objects before the mind as they really are. It takes the laws and

forms of thought to be the laws and forms of things. Thought grasps the very nature of things; it directly grasps absolute, objective, universal reality (*L*, 60–1).

On the other hand, modern empiricism abandons metaphysics and turns to experience. For empiricism, whatever is true must be a particular in the actual world and immediately present to sensation. Individuals must feel themselves present and involved in every fact of knowledge they accept. While the object is merely subjective experience, nevertheless, this experience is immediately present and completely certain to consciousness (*L*, 12, 76–8).

Kant's critical philosophy also considers experience to be the sole foundation for cognition. Moreover, all experience, for Kant, presupposes a transcendental unity of self-consciousness. The multiplicity of diverse sensations is brought into a unity only within a unified self-consciousness. These sensations are constituted into an object by this self-consciousness (*L*, 82, 87–9). Thus, Kant's strength is the same as empiricism's strength; an object must be *my* immediate experience for knowledge to be possible. But also, for Hegel, Kant's strength lies in the most important notion that the object is constituted by self-consciousness.

Hegel's philosophical system combines and synthesizes the strengths of these three previous philosophical systems. It combines the direct grasp of universal objective reality characteristic of traditional metaphysics with the Kantian and empiricist principle that all experience is immediately mine within consciousness, and it combines these with the Kantian principle that all objects are constituted within a single unified self-consciousness. Hegel's system is a re-organized synthetic unity of the positive achievements of all previous philosophy.

To achieve this synthesis, Hegel must abandon Kant's unknown thing-in-itself, which he very clearly finds unacceptable in any case (*L*, 91–2), and he must abandon the perspective of individual consciousness.

Since Hegel rejects the unknown thing-in-itself but still holds that experience is constituted by self-consciousness, he clearly cannot hold that self-consciousness constitutes mere phenomenal appearance cut off from a noumenal thing-in-itself which remains unknown. If we constitute experience and if the thing-in-itself is not to be unknown but known, then, for Hegel, we must constitute *reality*.

But if it were only individual self-consciousness that constituted reality, we would be plunged into a subjectivist chaos. What is required is an absolute self-consciousness (*L*, 93–4) – the consciousness of God, or a consciousness which has raised itself to the absolute perspective of God, which is to say, for Hegel, the religious self-consciousness of a developed culture. Here we have a total and universal consciousness which in constituting reality (as for Kant) would have reality immediately present to itself within consciousness (as for Kant and empiricism), and since it

includes *all* reality – there being no reality outside such a consciousness – it would also have that immediate grasp of objective reality characteristic of traditional metaphysics. The subjective principle of modern philosophy is compatible with the objectivity of traditional philosophy only for an absolute consciousness. God's subjectivity, because of its totality, is objective and absolute. Thus, in overcoming estrangement, as we have seen, cultural or religious self-consciousness faces all of reality constituted by itself and immediately present to itself as its own essence.

We must notice that what we have just said here describes at the metaphysical and epistemological level exactly what we earlier said about freedom in the moral and political sphere. Hegel's view that the subjective rationality of the individual must fit with the objective rationality embedded in the laws and institutions of the state is the same as his claim that the objective reality of traditional metaphysics must be immediately grasped within the subjective consciousness of individuals. This identity of subject and object is possible because the subject has constituted the object as its own essence through a dialectical process of alienation. Moreover, the fact that freedom requires that this identity of subjective and objective rationality be reinforced by custom, tradition and feeling is the same as Hegel's insistence that our grasp of objective reality be brought home to the personal and particular experience of the individual that we find in empiricism.

Furthermore, as particular interests come into conflict, they lead to the universal – to rationality objectively embedded in our world in agreement with subjective rationality, that is to the objectivity of traditional metaphysics. That they do so without being external to the universal (as self-interest was external to the general will for Rousseau or as Kantian virtue was external to the way of the world) can now be more clearly understood because it has become clear how individual interests and the universal are two interacting parts of one spiritual unity that constitute each other. The universal is produced as the alienation of the particular actions of individuals. The universal or the state is the individual's essence – its *self* – alienated and objectified. Particular interests and the universal are not heteronomous. They appear to be external to each other only if we adopt the perspective of individual consciousness.

Moreover, from what we have already said, we can also begin to understand more clearly the higher form of *Sittlichkeit* that Hegel wants for the modern world. This *Sittlichkeit* combines the rational reflective component of *Moralität* with the transcendence of the ought found in traditional *Sittlichkeit*. This higher *Sittlichkeit* is rational reflective morality concretely embedded in the customs, traditions, character and feeling of individuals – the objective ethical substance of traditional metaphysics (the identity of subjective and objective reason) embedded in the personal experience of the individual (as for empiricism). This connection is poss-

ible because of the dialectical process by which individuals constitute their substantial ethical world as their own essence and then are disciplined and educated by it.

All that we have said so far in this section will also help us to understand the transition from civil society to the state as it appears in the *Philosophy of Right*. Critics often object that Hegel is not a liberal, that he in fact subordinates individuals to a powerful and authoritarian state. This, at least in part, is very misleading. In the first place, civil society is the realm in which individual will has its rights, the realm where particular interests legitimately claim their satisfaction, and this is a crucial element of freedom of Hegel.

In civil society, particular interests are viewed, much as for Kant and Rousseau, from the perspective of individual consciousness and therefore individual will appears to remain external to the universal. Particular interests do lead to the universal, but they do so only unconsciously. Thus, for Hegel, we must move to the level of the state where consciousness transcends the realm of individual will and enters the realm of spirit. Here the rationality implicit in civil society (the unconscious tendency of particular interests to realize the universal) is posited and administered as law and thus becomes conscious, is recognized, and made actual (*PR*, 134–6). Here individual self-consciousness and the universal are not external to one another. Estrangement from the objective and universal has been overcome and thus individuals consciously will the universal and become free.

Hegel continually tells us in the *Philosophy of Right* that the relationship that is established between the individual citizens and the ethical substance – the laws and institutions of the state – is such that individuals are related to their own essence, their own substance.[22] Indeed, we have now seen what Hegel means here. The state *is* the alienated essence of the individual citizens. The state is constituted by them, but not as an other – not as heteronomous. The state is their own essence objectified and universalized. Hegel does indeed subordinate individuals to the state, but thus only to their own essence – to themselves. This, then, is a form of objective self-determination because the subjective reason of the individual accords with the rationality objectively embedded in the laws and institutions of the state.[23]

For freedom to be realized, particular interests cannot lead to the universal unconsciously as they do in civil society; the state cannot be one's own essence in an estranged form without this being consciously recognized; and subjective and objective reason cannot accord unconsciously. All of this must occur *consciously*.[24] We must *recognize* that particular interests do lead to the universal and begin consciously to pursue the universal in pursuing our own interests. We must recognize that the state is our own essence and subordinate ourselves to it con-

sciously and intentionally. We must recognize that subjective and objective reason accord and act consciously *for the sake of* objective as well as subjective reason – for the sake of the rational laws as well as our own rational maxims. Moreover, the objective rational laws of the state immediately present to the subjective rationality of the individual give rise to a discipline which moulds the customs, feelings and interests of the individual so that they too consciously support the universal. Thus we have *Sittlichkeit* in the modern state (*PR*, 105).

Hegel wants to combine the subjectivity of the modern world with the objectivity of the ancient world. Both civil society and the state are crucially important here. Without civil society, there would be no individualism and no realm for the satisfaction of particular interest which is so important as an element of freedom. There would be no conflict of interests as an actual force leading to the universal either within the state or in history. And there would be no rootedness in concrete interests, passions, property, trade and commerce. Without civil society, the realm of the state and spirit would float into abstraction. On the other hand, without the state, individuals would never rise above particular interests; they would never get beyond an unconscious tendency towards the universal. They would never get beyond subjective reason to reason embedded objectively in their laws and institutions. They would never confront their own essence objectified and thus could not be free in obeying the state. In short, they would not reach spirit.

To reconcile modern subjectivity with traditional objectivity, two things are necessary: (1) the objective must be absorbed within the subjective, not exist independently outside it. And (2) the subjective must gain enough scope and universality to be objective and absolute. It must embrace the totality of things like a God whose subjectivity is objective because it is total.

By lifting individual self-consciousness to spirit we see that the state is our own essence, that subjective and objective reason are identical, that the objective reality of traditional metaphysics is immediately grasped within subjective consciousness. The objective world is not other or heteronomous, but is absorbed within subjective consciousness. But subjective consciousness at this point is no longer merely an individual consciousness. It has been moulded and disciplined by the objective substantial power of the state. It has become the cultural consciousness of a people. It has been lifted to the universal, to objective ethical rationality. At the level of the state, this consciousness becomes the final highest authority – the sovereignty of the state constitutes consciousness as sovereign. In this way, subjective consciousness gains scope and universality.

Hegel is certainly not an authoritarian, let alone a totalitarian. As Avineri has shown, there is even a strong element of pluralism in Hegel's thought.[25] Hegel also endorses freedom of the press and of speech, and

he advocates social mobility. (*PR*, 132, 205). The state is also very definitely concerned with the protection of individuals, their property and their particular interests, but these are not the ultimate aims of the state (*PR*, 71, 156, 209). The ultimate aim of the state is to lift its citizens to spirit, to their own essence and to the Divine. Only at this level is the individual fully realized, at home with itself and rationally self-determined.

Hegel wants to avoid a sovereign like that of Hobbes who is external to the citizens and wields power over them. Nor will he accept a state like that of Rousseau, for whom the people are sovereign. Just as much, he wants to avoid Kant's autocrat, who is external to the citizens and wields power over them as much as for Hobbes despite the fact that the autocrat gives the people the laws they would have given themselves.[26] For Hegel, the citizens do not give themselves their own laws by voting on them as for Rousseau. The citizens, however, do get the sorts of laws they would have given themselves, but they are not given to them by an autocrat as for Kant. The laws and institutions of the state, for Hegel, arise through the historical development of spirit in which the subjective rationality of individuals accords with the objective rationality embedded in the laws of the state – the laws of the state are the laws that subjective rationality would give itself. Through alienation the citizens create the state as their own essence and are moulded by their state. For Hegel the government or the state is not external to the citizens; it is their own essence. For Hegel, sovereignty must be understood not at the level of individual will – the individual will either of a people or a government – but at the level of spirit. Hegel's view of sovereignty is thus quite new.

No one of the powers or agencies in the state is sovereign for Hegel. They have no independent authority, but are grounded in the Idea of the whole (*PR*, 179–80). Certainly the monarch is not sovereign. Any state simply requires an agency with the authority of final decision, otherwise disputes could continue eternally. This authority of final decision rests with the monarch. But this just means that the monarch has 'to say yes and dot the "i" '.[27] Generally speaking, Hegel's monarch is rather weak.[28] Hegel does at times speak of the monarch as sovereign (*PR*, 182, 186), but by this he means that the monarch is a figurehead who represents sovereignty. On the other hand, at least in home affairs, Hegel is willing to say that sovereignty resides in the people, not the people as an aggregate of individual wills but the people as the whole of the state (*PR*, 182–3). Sovereignty lies in the organic whole bound together by *Sittlichkeit* at the level of spirit. It does not lie either with the government or the people understood as individual wills. It lies in this spiritual totality as a whole. This possibility is due to the cohesion of this whole which is bound together by the integration of particular interests embedded in property, commerce and trade which nevertheless lead to the universal.

The whole is also bound together by custom, tradition and *Sittlichkeit* which embed this universal in individual feeling and character. It is bound together in that subjective reason and objective reason are identical and in the sense that the state is one's own essence. For Hegel the sovereign is not to be seen as an entity which *wields* power *over* others from outside.[29] Rather, Hegel is concerned with power and authority which binds people together, makes them cohere, lifts them to their own essence at the level of spirit, and makes them rationally self-determined. They are not ruled by the subjective rationality of either the government or the people, but by the objective rationality embedded in the state as a whole which, however, accords with the subjective rationality of each. To return to individual will, to insist upon voting or subjective rationality, in Hegel's opinion, would be to break this spiritual whole and to move towards making individual will sovereign, either the individual will of a government or that of the aggregate of the people. If one chooses the latter, then as for Rousseau, we would have to give up wealth, commerce and trade, and thus the ideal society would be impossible in the modern world.

Notes

1 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View' (UH), in *On History: Immanuel Kant*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 11–13, 15.

2 UH, 23. 'Perpetual Peace' (PP), in *On History*, 114.

3 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*F*), trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), 39ff.

4 *F*, 62–3. *Critique of Practical Reason* (*CPrR*), trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), 66.

5 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (New York: Modern Library, 1937), 423.

6 *Natural Law* (*NL*), trans. T. M. Knox (N.C.: U of Pennsylvania P, 1975), 93. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (*PR*), trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1967), 209, 212–13.

7 *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction* (*IPH*), trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), 71–2.

8 *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*PS*), trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977), 228–30.

9 *PS*, 235. See also *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1975), 1:56–61.

10 *F*, 10, 13–17, 44, 53–4, 60–1. *CPrR*, 28, 31.

11 *PR*, 12, 32–3, 90–1, 163–4. *IPH*, 70, 97, 146. *Aesthetics*, 1:98, 182–3.

12 *The Logic of Hegel* (*L*), trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968), 91–2.

13 *On the Social Contract* (*SC*), ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Judith R. Masters (New York: St Martin's, 1978), 59n, 62–3, 66, 110–11.

14 'Political Economy', in *SC*, 222, 77.

15 'Discourse on Inequality' (DI), in *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St Martin's, 1964), 151–4, 157–9.

16 *Philosophy of History* (*PH*), trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 407 (Hegel's italics).

17 *PR*, 125; translation altered by changing 'maturing (*bildet*)' to 'educating'.

18 *PR*, 157; see also 33. Also *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 3:402.

19 For example, Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972), 184. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), 372.

20 *PR*, 157, 202–3. *PS*, 357–9. *PH*, 452.

21 *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, 2nd edn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), 789–92; translation altered slightly; cf. *PS*, 479–81. For a further discussion of alienation and estrangement, see my *Schiller, Hegel, and Marx* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1982), 40–56.

22 *PR*, 105–6, 155, 160–1, 259.

23 *PR*, 3, 12, 106, 125. *IHP*, 97. *PH*, 439.

24 *PR*, 3, 29–30, 155–6, 163–4.

25 Avineri, 167–75. Hegel advocates pluralism in religion and even the toleration of dissenting sects that are allowed to maintain their own customs, traditions and religious views; *PR*, 168–9.

26 'An Old Question Raised Again', in *On History*, 146, 150. PP, 120.

27 *PR*, 181, 288–9. Though the monarch does command the army; *PR*, 212.

28 For example, he is bound by the decisions of his counsellors; PR, 288.

29 At least not in domestic affairs, though this might be true in foreign relations; see *PR*, 212–13.

Hegel and historicism[1]

Stanley Rosen

1 THEORY, POLITICS AND HISTORY

The Greek word *historia* means 'inquiry', with special emphasis upon direct inspection, either by watching the events as they transpire, or by talking to someone who participated in them. In the first case, the inquiry may be either theoretical or practical. We may look at heavenly or natural beings or at the acts of men. In the latter case, our inquiry is practical because of its object; however, it does not, in the modern sense of the term, produce anything. Those acts which are most worthy of our observation are, broadly speaking, political: that is events which concern the order and well-being of the city as a whole. Some of these acts are productive, and some are not. They include not merely debates over public policy, wars and the like, but also dramatic performances, rhetorical displays and, in certain cases, technical production (perhaps the most obvious of which is the discovery of new weapons). Looking at political acts is also, or goes together with, listening. Whether or not we ourselves speak or write is a secondary matter. If we do so, then our inquiry itself may, and probably does, become a political act.

A *historia*, then, is first the private act of looking or inquiring, and second, the possibly public consequences of that act of looking or inquiring. Can one say that for the Greeks there is something corresponding to 'historical existence' in the various modern and contemporary senses of that expression? Clearly not, unless we take the phrase to be equivalent to 'political life'. It would be inappropriate to say that theoretical looking is a mode of historical existing, since the Greek thinkers believed that 'looking' in the sense of 'seeing the nature' is independent of political laws, customs, or collisions between cities or groups within the city. Even those who regarded the things at which they looked to be in motion would not have said that the vision of natural change is itself conditioned

by political events. To see that everything changes is to see something that does not change. This formulation covers even the doctrines of the sophists as presented in an extreme form by Plato in dialogues like the *Theaetetus*. Protagoras is there made to argue that perception is finally a matter of desire for the beneficial, in the sense of the healthy (166ff.). But Protagoras never suggests that his teaching about perception is true only under certain political circumstances. He does, of course, say that what a city regards as healthy will depend upon its constitution, i.e. upon the state of its 'senses'. If this looks to the contemporary reader like the modern doctrine of historical relativism, let him recall that for Protagoras, the theoretical statement about the conditions of cities is itself extra-political. One could therefore say that, in the Greek context, something like historicism might possibly be detected, provided that we ignore theory, or in other words, provided that we equate our 'historical' inquiries with the specifically political deliberations and political implications of technical productions.

This observation, it seems to me, is helpful when we try to find our bearings with respect to the doctrine of historicism. To put the point once more in the simplest possible way, historicism arises when theory ceases to mean extra-political looking. This point is not quite as simple as it sounds. It gives us the very interesting result that historicism is closely connected to politics. One could even say that historicism arises when politics itself undergoes a deterioration analogous to that by which theory is politicized. For example, it may be that if theory is politicized, then the justification for the city (or state) depends entirely upon patriotism, that is upon the health of the city in a sense not at all distinct from what Protagoras asserts in the *Theaetetus*. The health of the city is, as it were, the bloom on the face of its power, the vigour of its belief in itself. The city can justify itself only by looking at itself. Perhaps under extreme circumstances, this form of narcissism may be indefinitely continued. However, it inevitably comes to a close when there is contact with other cities. If knowledge is political, and there are many political beings, then knowledge of the righteousness of one's own city rests upon strength of belief: upon resolution, courage or commitment. These now fashionable terms, used primarily if not exclusively with respect to the apolitical individual, were once included in the notion of patriotism. But it becomes progressively more difficult to sustain one's patriotism, or the resoluteness of one's narcissism, as one's political experience accumulates. For reasons which need not detain us here, this accumulation of experience comes to be known as *history*. From here it is a short step to the notion that human existence is not primarily political, but is rather *historical*. Since theory was, by hypothesis, previously politicized, it now becomes historicized. However, by the cunning of reason, to employ a good Hegelian phrase, this result simply reproduces the situation from which we began.

For we now have to decide whether it is possible to look at history in an extra-historical way. Is theory about history possible? In other words, is 'philosophy of history' possible? This is the question which should occur to anyone who approaches Hegel for the first time, and certainly to the inquirer about Hegel and historicism.

2 TWO CONCEPTS OF HISTORICISM

So much by way of introduction. Now let us come a bit closer to grips with the topic. We need to have a specific understanding of the term 'historicism' in order to see whether it is applicable to Hegel. I shall distinguish two fundamental senses of the term. According to the first, whether or not nature is independent of history (and this cannot be determined), man's apprehension of nature is conditioned by history. In this case, answers to questions like 'what is true?', 'what is good?' and perhaps 'what is beautiful?' are relative to differing historical circumstances. We note that, for the most part, these circumstances are political, at least in the older sense of the term. On this view, the addressees of our questions, including ourselves, reveal themselves in accord with the different perspectives opened by shifting political relations. The language of revelation may be taken to imply that natural, or supernatural, beings lie beyond their historical manifestations. This is what gives coherence to history, and so makes possible our posing of questions about truth, goodness and beauty, however temporal may be the answers available to us.

In the second sense of the term 'historicism', the distinction between nature and history, even as a possibility, disappears. One could express this in two ways, either by saying that nature *is* history, or that the sense of nature (and so, of 'is') is historical. This is taken to mean that there are no beings, natural or supernatural, concealed behind their temporal manifestations. In the first case, it is possible to say that the questions we pose about truth, goodness and beauty are somehow the same, even though their answers at different epochs are not. That is, we can make sense out of history, including the boundary between nature and history. In the second case, no such sense is accessible. The ground of sense is inaccessible; still more radically, there is no ground of sense. History is then a senseless flow of appearances; more accurately, the assessments we make of those appearances are appearances of appearances. We must then deny any stable significance to the term 'history' itself. And the result is silence, or what comes to the same thing, infinite chatter.

It can be said at once that Hegel is not a historicist in the second sense of the term. But it is not quite so easy to decide whether he is a historicist

in the first sense. What is beyond dispute is that he makes certain contributions to the development of historicism. To mention only two crucial points: he identifies the structure of eternity with that of human history, and he prepares for the lowered status of politics by his distinction between the state and society. In this paper, I shall be concerned primarily with the first point. Let me therefore say a word about the second, before turning to my main theme. The distinction between state and society has as one of its motives the preservation of individual freedom, and thereby the strengthening of the state. It is related to the fact that for Hegel, art, religion and philosophy (which includes science) are the perfection of the subjective spirit, and not of the objective or (as we may put it) politicized individual. Hegel is not a vulgar Marxist, for whom all spiritual production can be explained in terms of concrete political or economic events. Spiritual productions are produced by the spirit, which follows a historical development, but not one that is subordinate to the state. On the contrary, the state is determined by spiritual development. But the separation of the individual as a social being from the state, however interrelated the two may be in Hegel, combines with his aforementioned identification of eternity and history to prepare the way for a private and historical conception of spiritual satisfaction. In other words, the state as the practical actuality of the Absolute, itself manifested in the theoretical comprehension of the wise man, is replaced by the state as the consequence of the resolution or will to power of the radically creative historical individual. This result occurs as soon as the notion of the Absolute is historicized.

However important this point may be to the understanding of Hegel's doctrine of history, it is secondary to the identification of eternity and human history. Let us therefore concentrate upon this difficult thesis. And we begin with a simple observation. To assert that God and nature *are* history (whatever this may mean in detail) is to make an absolute statement about the Whole or totality (*das Ganze*). This statement cannot itself be a transient historical creature. Of course, the statement may be enunciated in a given historical epoch, under definite political circumstances which, according to the doctrine, may be necessary conditions for its revelation. But this does not in itself deprive the doctrine of its absolute status. It serves instead to distinguish the given historical epoch as the absolute moment of history in which the Absolute speaks the total truth about itself. For this decisive reason, Hegel is not a genuine historicist, in either sense of the term just distinguished. Yet he may be called a historicist in a transcendental sense: Hegel's assertion of historicism is at once a transcendence of history. The root of the doctrine of history is eternity or the Absolute. History is thus for Hegel the manifestation of the complete growth of the root, a manifestation that occurs in

and for human beings. Let us look at some of the crucial details of this contention.

According to Hegelian teaching there are, so to speak, two distinguishable 'shows' or 'manifestations', and the comprehensive truth or the Absolute is their articulated unity, which Hegel calls their identity-within-difference. The first 'show' is described cryptically yet effectively in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Hegel says there:

> Logic is thus to be grasped as the system of pure reason, as the domain of pure thinking. *This domain is the truth, as it is without covering, in and for itself*. One may thus express oneself as follows, that this content is the performance [*Darstellung*] of God: how he is in his eternal essence, before the creation of nature and a finite spirit.[2]

The *Logic*, then, is not simply a 'theory' constructed or created by a historical being, or the expression of a historical perspective. It is God manifesting himself as the Absolute, in and for the thought of Hegel, and by extension, to those who can think Hegel's thoughts. This manifestation or performance is no more historical than is the thinking of a mathematical truth for a Platonist. It is, of course, an activity or process, as I have tried to bring out by translating *Darstellung* as 'performance'. But the process is that of eternity, unfolding to itself, and thus grasping itself as Idea within the circular or eternally recurring pulsation of the speculative concept. In plain English, Hegel's thought in the *Logic* is the thought of God, and in both the subjective and objective senses of the genitive.

The writing of the book *Science of Logic* in the nineteenth century by an individual German Lutheran living in (finally) Prussia is, of course, a historical event in the usual sense of the term. It is made possible, or rather necessary, by the second 'show', namely, world history. In theological language, God, having created the world, reveals himself to a man by a series of stages corresponding to the development of the human or finite spirit. The crucial moment, but not the last or ripest one, is the actual entrance of God into human history, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ. In religious terms, then, history is the process by which man develops from belief in, to knowledge of, God. When this development is completed, the 'childish form' (as Hegel calls it) of our understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost is replaced by the ripe speculative knowledge of logical reason.[3] God is then grasped as the absolute process or trans-historical performance recorded in the *Logic*. The history of man's religious development corresponds to, or is the temporal manifestation of, the absolute development of the Logos or God as living self-conscious and self-knowing concept. This history is essentially completed

when man acquires conceptual knowledge of God. As Hegel puts it, there is no longer a 'Beyond' or an alienation between God and man. Existentially, God is actual within the community of his believers.[4] The individual subject or member of the religious community is filled with divine Spirit by belief.[5] But this is not yet the highest and deepest stage of religion, namely, wisdom, or the identification with eternity by a thinking (discursively or conceptually) of the universal.[6] When Hegel says, at the end of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821), that 'religion must take refuge in philosophy', and that philosophers make up an isolated priesthood whose task is to stand apart from the world (and hence, I add, from the religious community) in order to take care of the truth,[7] he is saying that the significance of belief depends upon conceptual knowledge. And this is what he means by the occasional remark that the content of religion and philosophy are the same. The content is the coincidence of eternity and temporality, but it is thought only by philosophy.

Religious or divine history (the Christian chapter of religious history altogether: the repentance and conversion of natural spirit) culminates in a union between man and God in wisdom.[8] Religious history, however, is the significance of world history, expressed in a form accessible to *Verstand*, or representational and reflective (as opposed to speculative or finally comprehensive) thinking. As Hegel makes clear in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, religious, and so world history, correspond to the *incomplete* human spirit, that is to its temporal development towards a reflexive logical grasp of itself as totality.[9] Since logic is the truth of history, or conversely, since history is the manifestation of the Absolute in human time (that is the humanly accessible meaning of the logical identity-within-difference of eternity and temporality), if history were not essentially complete, the truth of logic would be inaccessible. There would remain a 'Beyond' or alienation between God and man. In short, Hegel's system would dissolve. In religious language, God would not yet have arrived at the last stage of world history. However, both these possibilities are explicitly denied by Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. The period of European history from the Protestant Reformation onward is the raising of 'the last flag of time': it corresponds to the *parousia* of the Holy Ghost, or the reunion of the divine Father and Son.[10] And the 'last stage' of the last stage is 'our world', 'our time', that is the period from the French Revolution to Hegel's own explanation of the significance, not just of world history, but of the Absolute whose transcendental process it mirrors in human time. The end of human history is the achievement by spirit of the knowledge of its true nature.[11] That is, 'world history is the performance [*Darstellung*] of the divine, absolute process of spirit in its highest forms, of the steps through which it obtains its

truth, self-consciousness about itself'.[12] These steps (the *Volksgeister*) are 'the necessary moments of the one universal spirit which, through them within history, raises and concludes itself in a self-grasping totality'.[13] Spirit actualizes its end or fulfilment in history: it produces knowledge of itself in the self-consciousness of Hegel. This is what Hegel means when he says that the result of world history 'is known to me, because I already know the All (*das Ganze*)'.[14]

Let me recapitulate very briefly. The first show is the performance of God as eternal, circular, absolute process. The second show is the process of human history, which reveals the eternal and absolute process in a series of stages that are temporal analogues to the stages of the eternal process. The eternal process, as circular, is the identity-within-difference of the finite and the infinite, i.e. of 'finite' in the sense of being fully accessible to conceptual intelligence. It is complete. Therefore, the temporal process of human history, whether political, aesthetic, religious or philosophical, is also essentially complete. And 'essentially' means that the significance of human life is fully understood conceptually by Hegel, and by those who understand his teaching. Hegel's teaching is thus *the show of shows*: the reconciliation between God and man or between eternity and temporality. In the language of the *Phenomenology*, spirit completes the circuit of its 'fall into time' by grasping its pure concept. To do this, or to think the *Logic*, is to 'cancel time'.[15] This is, of course, not intended to mean that time is literally annihilated, but that spirit, as thinking the *Logic*, dwells in the bosom of the Lord, or 'exists' as the actualization of eternity. This is a spiritualized version of the teaching of Spinoza.

3 THE DILEMMA OF THE END OF HISTORY

We must now face a difficult and much-disputed issue. According to the Christian doctrine, the overcoming of human differences, or of alienation from oneself, one's fellows, and God brings history literally to an end. The 'day of judgement' arrives, the *Augenblick* or instant of eternity, and human temporality is no more. Hegel never mentions favourably or teaches anything of this sort. Reconciliation with God and personal immortality occur exclusively in *this* world, within the eternal present. As Peter Cornehl puts it in his valuable study, salvation is not for Hegel *Entweltlichung* but *Einweltlichung*.[16] To quote Hegel himself, the meaning of the Christian doctrine of immortality is that 'the soul, the individual subjectivity, has an infinite, eternal determination, to be citizen in the domain of God. The infinite demand to view God, i.e. to become conscious in the spirit of his truth as present, is not in this temporal present

for the consciousness as sensuously intuiting, as representing.'[17] To *Vernunft*, or logically articulate reason, eternity is *within* the temporal present, *which is therefore eternal.* A detailed demonstration of this conclusion would require a technical analysis of the *Logic.* I have tried to provide some of this elsewhere, and will make the point now in a more accessible if necessarily summary way.

According to Hegel, time is the externalization of pure internality,[18] that is, it is the principle of pure self-consciousness, or the unfolding of the spatio-temporal continuum of becoming (the externalization of spirit), in which all determinations arise, thanks to the co-ordinate, self-development of self-consciousness or subjectivity.[19] The overcoming of the separation between subject and object in absolute wisdom is thus the total development of the implications of the abstract structure of temporality itself. The moment or instant is an *Aufhebung* of past and future: it contains the previous as well as the next moment. Hegel's systematic wisdom amounts to a complete explanation of this comprehensive structure of the instant as present. Temporal presence is thus the presence of eternity within time, and therefore of the eternity *of* time. The analysis of the temporal moment thus provides us with the simplest example of what Hegel means by 'double negation', the heart of his logical doctrine. However, a problem arises. If time is eternal, and history is the sense of time, the eternal succession of temporal moments does not seem to contradict the finite or complete presentation of history as sense of that eternal sequence. On the other hand, since time never ceases, neither can history, if only as the perpetual show of the fulfilled sense of the identity of eternity and temporality. In short, once the truth is revealed, nothing fundamental can change.

Let us look more closely at this peculiar situation. Suppose we distinguish between essential and ordinary or contingent history. Once Hegel reveals the truth, wisdom is complete (although not, of course, the process by which contingent individuals acquire the Hegelian wisdom). Therefore nothing essentially new can occur. And this, again, means that all categories of logic are manifest. The total manifestation of categories quite literally demands the eternity of time, as I have just pointed out. But there is no reason to suppose that ordinary or empirical history will not continue in new and unpredictable ways. America, Russia, or Brazil (Hegel's examples) may well be the next earthly dwelling of the world-spirit. Perhaps the Hegelian teaching will be lost entirely by future man, and then once more acquired. As Hegel himself says in his lectures on the philosophy of history, immediately after identifying America as the land of the future revelation of world history:

> Philosophy has nothing to do with prophecy. We have rather to do with that side of history which has been and with that which is – in

> philosophy, however, with that which has neither merely been, nor will only be, but with that which *is* and is eternal – with reason, and with that we have enough to do.[20]

In other words, ours is that 'last' age, not of empirical history, but of the essential cycle of time within which the concept is revealed to man. This cycle we call 'our' history, i.e. up to the point of Hegel. But we should do better to call it the 'logical blueprint' for understanding history altogether in its unending process. Note carefully that this is not to deny the uniqueness of our cycle *as* a blueprint. However, since the circle of time (and so of history) is an element within the comprehensive circle of eternity, or a showing of eternity to itself *as* temporality (which is needed for the completeness of eternity as the All), and since this showing is eternal, it must be the case that the show is either coextensive with eternity, or else that it is eternally repeated. Now the problem of the end of history is profoundly visible. The temporal show cannot be coextensive with eternity because, if it were, then the Absolute would never be fully or essentially revealed. Hegel's teaching is then dissolved into a doctrine of 'infinite progress' (a notion he despised). The unending revelation of the Absolute – one day in America, the next in Russia, and so on for ever – is not really an absolute revelation, but an infinite sequence of finite and hence infinitely unsatisfactory revelations. This is vulgar or superficial historicism. If, however, the temporal show is not coextensive with eternity, then there is a permanent alienation between logic and history, between God and man, or universal and particular, and Hegelian *Wissenschaft* is again impossible. We may try to avoid this dilemma by claiming that eternity and temporality are the same, and thus that the eternal repetition of the show is in fact 'the eternal return to the same'. To do this, however, is to take the step from Hegel to Nietzsche, a step, needless to say, that Hegel did not himself sanction.

In my opinion, if we remain within the Hegelian teaching, and preserve the isomorphism between eternity and temporality, then there is no solution to the dilemma of the end of history. For Hegel, essential history *must* end, in the sense of providing a complete and final revelation of the truth, and so of the significance, of history. But history can end, in this sense, only because eternity manifests itself fully within, and is categorically or structurally the same as, time. This is mandatory for Hegel because philosophy proceeds by a developing comprehension, exclusively through man's unassisted reason, of the concrete historical world. The categories of logic are discovered by the dialectical process of attempting to understand human experience *without* speculative logic. There are no divine revelations, no mystical intuitions, no 'leaps' beyond the *hic et nunc* to a transcending realm of experience or cognition. One must think through human experience, step by step (as schematized in

the *Phenomenology*), in order to arrive at the threshold of logic. Since logic is the rethinking or 'recollecting' of what has been experienced in and as history, or (in the terms of the *Encyclopaedia*) of what has been experienced in raising self-consciousness to the certitude of itself as truth, namely, as the identity of subject and object – that is to the level of *Vernunft*[21] – there can be no content in logic that is not already present in phenomenology or *Verstand*. The categories of logic *are* the structures of time, and so of human temporality. The logical process of rethinking history takes place 'beyond' history (in speculative reason), yet at the same time 'within' history (in the person of Hegel). Hegel's thinking is thus the individual that unites the universal and the particular, or the eternal and the temporal. It is the conceptual articulation of the image of Christ. This is what Hegel means by the famous remark that the owl of Minerva takes flight only at dusk.[22] Every individual is a son of his time, but Hegel is *the* son of *the* time. He is the fulfilment of the promise of Christ. The remark about being a son of one's own time is immediately contrasted with the process, rejected by Hegel, of building in thought a world as it ought to be, an imaginary 'beyond' that has no actuality in the temporal present.[23] The meaning of these remarks from the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, too often quoted as though they explain the corpus of Hegel's work, on the contrary becomes visible only when we grasp the meaning of that work. Only then will we know what it means for Hegel to be a son of his time.

Granted the finality (in the sense explained) of Hegel's age, and of his doctrine as the explanation of the significance of that age, the problem of explaining the post-Hegelian historical future is still unresolved. A future in which nothing logically new is revealed is just a contingent footnote to eternity. How, then, can it be part of the circle of temporality which exhibits the structure of eternity? On the same basis, it becomes impossible to understand how the Hegelian teaching could ever be forgotten, since to do so would be to suffer a 'post-Hegelian' phenomenon, whereas the circle of temporality, defined as history, and so as the development of the (eternal) concept, purports to explain only the process by which man develops into, and culminates with, the Hegelian wisdom. The Hegelian must then claim that history is *essentially* complete, but also that it is contingently complete. And yet, he cannot make this claim, at least not one moment after the deterioration of Hegel's age, a process that began, as we may say, with his death. The only comprehensible interpretation of Hegel's teaching, I suggest, is that history repeats itself exactly and for ever: a rigorous version of Nietzsche's teaching of the eternal return, a perpetual process by which the eternal shows its absolute development in the mirror of time, and so a perpetual repetition of the same show. Unfortunately, post-Hegelian experience, to say nothing of

Hegel's own occasional remarks about the future, show that this interpretation is impossible.

4 THE ALIENATION OF TIME FROM ETERNITY IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Hegel's dilemma, just studied, apparently arises from the structural identification of eternity and temporality. I suggested that the reason for this identification is the need to make scientific knowledge – basically 'logic' in Hegel's sense – accessible to man's unassisted reason. Are there deeper motives for this identification? I believe that we must at least raise this question in order to point towards a more adequate understanding of the meaning of historicism than can emerge from a sketch of Hegel's philosophy of history. The immediate justification for our renewal of the question is simple enough. Empiricists also restrict human knowledge to what can be inferred from temporal experience. Yet even if they give a kind of eternal status to mathematics and logic, which is of course not always the case, they certainly do not conclude their analyses with a claim to absolute wisdom.

In the famous phrase, there is a distinction between the forms of logico-mathematical thinking and the content of experience. The forms of rational thought may be defined as self-evident, or they may be reduced to the status of human stipulations or creations. But what is self-evident to one man is questionable to another. Apart from technical problems of definition intrinsic to mathematical thinking, the question arises inevitably concerning the origin of pure forms and their applicability to empirical phenomena. If the forms are the self-evident structure of eternity, then the empirical phenomena are not 'appearances' in the sense of the temporal presentation of eternal essences, but *illusions* of a stable world which is in fact flux or chaos. In this case, however, the visibility of the pure mathematical forms has no essential applicability to empirical illusion, except to destroy it or to expose it as an illusion. Mathematical thinking thus attains to the truth, or to eternity, by the destruction of self-consciousness, or of the thinking of phenomena as phenomena. This is the dualism of seventeenth-century mathematical rationalism, a kind of restricted Platonism in which 'wisdom' is death to this world, or an assimilation of the knower to geometrical intuition and algebraic equations.

Mathematical rationalism thus leads directly to historicism. Since mathematics supplies us with formal intuitions, or with equations of exclusively numerical 'values', it says nothing of its own significance. The decision to employ mathematics, or to transcend temporality in eternity, is non-mathematical. No doubt such a decision once it is made, could be

expressed in mathematical form and its implications deduced. But this has nothing to do with the sense or appropriateness of the decision itself. In the terminology of seventeenth-century rationalism, the decision springs from the passions, whether as the desire to modify the immediate environment or, more comprehensively, as the desire to become master and possessor of nature. To put the problem in its simplest and most radical form: mathematics alienates the mathematician from *himself*. If philosophy is identical with mathematics or meta-mathematics, then the source of meta-mathematics falls under the supervision of the non-mathematician, such as the minister, sociologist, or psychiatrist. This amounts to the admission that mathematics, and so philosophy, has no intrinsic justification. The next step is to smuggle into philosophy the justification of ideology; in this case, the ideology of the scientific enlightenment. Thus the distinction between form and content, apparently required to preserve the integrity or absolute status of form, reduces content to illusion. And even, let me note in passing, if one could recapture the essentiality of appearances by submitting them to a logical analysis, the entire activity would still possess no significance or justification in human terms, since the intention of the analyst would depend for its essentiality or integrity upon being transformed into a logical form.

This leads merely to the need to assign an arbitrary value to the logical form of the intention or, if it is in turn replaced by a logical form, to an infinite regress of analyses. The value of the content, or indeed the content itself, is an illusion. But we ourselves, we mathematicians, are ingredient in this illusion. The attempt to overcome this self-embarrassment is well known, and is based upon a radical reinterpretation of the mathematical consciousness or (in its original form) the Cartesian *cogito*. The function of the *cogito* in Descartes's own philosophy has often been exaggerated, mainly because of the use to which it was put in German philosophy, but also because we read the *Meditations* today without taking seriously Descartes's remarks to Mersenne that the treatise is a disguised version of his physics. However this may be, Descartes does propound the doctrine that I may doubt everything, except for the fact that I doubt, or more generally, that I cannot be mistaken that I am thinking, and so that, as thinking, I exist. (A more extensive consideration of Descartes would have to notice that mathematical truths are never called into doubt by him.) It is important to remember that, in the first radical reinterpretation of this doctrine, by Kant, the indubitable content of the *cogito* has a transcendental, and not an empirical or historical status. Empiricists both before and after Kant have argued that the fact that I think is no basis for logical inferences about the essential stability, continuity or nature of the thinking 'I'. Again put simply, as the argument goes, I have no guarantee that the 'I' who is at this moment thinking is

logically or substantially the same as the 'I' who thought yesterday or who perhaps will think tomorrow.

Such an argument, incidentally, is based upon the belief that the continuity of the 'I' requires logical or discursive demonstration. But demonstration is necessarily undertaken by an 'I' to or for an 'I'. The 'I'-by-whom need not be numerically the same as the 'I'-to-whom. But it must be able to follow its own demonstration in order to present it to the numerically distinct 'I'. And this unites the two intellectually or logically if not numerically. The simplest way to state the consequence is as follows. If I am to demonstrate to myself that I cannot know myself to be the same man today that I was yesterday, I must know that I am the same man who today remembers yesterday's pretender to my identity, and who can imagine tomorrow's candidate, and more importantly, who will tomorrow remember today's demonstration. One cannot demonstrate the continuity of identity because demonstration presupposes this continuity. Since the demonstration is intelligible to the two 'I's' (whether or not these are numerically the same), their continuity must be the same. In following a demonstration, I must know that the 'I' who demonstrates is continuously the same throughout the demonstration, and that I am also the same throughout the activity of following that demonstration. The force of the demonstration of discontinuity depends upon the continuity of the memory or the stability of the 'I'. Kant treats this stability as a logical condition, whereas his successors treat it as the principle of self-consciousness.

Kant retains the distinction between form and empirical content in his doctrine of the transcendental ego. The transcendental ego is not a self-conscious absolute spirit or daimonic version of the 'I'. It is the logically necessary condition for the possibility of thought. A thought is always thought by a thinker. The empirical or historical thinker, in propounding his finite, immanent and discontinuous thought, actualizes a process that is the same for every thinker. It is not the self-consciousness of the empirical or historical thinker that is given transcendental status, but the logical categories intrinsic to the activity instantiated by every case of 'I think . . . such-and-such.' The absence of a transcendental doctrine of self-consciousness in Kant is obvious from his doctrine of appearances and things-in-themselves. Among the latter is the individual soul. The empirical thinker is an appearance, even to himself as thinking. Only in the domain of practical reason, or morality, does he acquire direct contact with his noumenal, and presumably eternal, personality or self.

In Kant's teaching, then, the empirical or historical individual remains *alienated* from his eternal, true or significant self. It is plain from Kant's essays on the philosophy of history that he was aware of the human, if not the transcendental, shortcomings of his own teaching. The Kantian doctrine provides us with an account of scientific knowledge, and of free

will or morality. But it offers no discursive account of the unity of knowledge and morality. Even Kant's *Critique of Judgment* attempts to overcome the disjunction between theory (scientific knowledge) and practice (morality) in terms of a logico-hypothetical doctrine of the coherence of nature and its fittingness to be thought by the human intelligence. The fact that we can make judgments of an aesthetic and purposive nature, even though these judgments cannot be explained by the logical apparatus of the transcendental ego, or by the moral doctrine of human dignity and the categorical imperative, requires us to assume that the world has been created or organized by a beneficent intelligence. But this assumption can never be transformed into rational, conceptual knowledge. To quote Kant:

> For external objects as phenomena an adequate ground related to purposes cannot be met with; this, although it lies in nature, must only be sought in the supersensible substrate of nature, from all possible insight into which we are cut off. Hence it is absolutely impossible for us to produce from nature itself grounds of explanation for purposive combinations, and it is necessary by the constitution of the human cognitive faculties to seek the supreme ground of these purposive combinations in an original understanding as the cause of the world.[24]

That is, as Kant emphasizes, it is *possible*, in the sense of not self-contradictory, to seek the ground of significance and order in the supersensible or noumenal domain, and *necessary* for us to do so in order to justify significance and coherence.[25] But we will never actually acquire this ground.

The radical distinction between form and content, present in modern rationalism from the outset, and in a way traceable back to the Platonic dialogues, is still fundamental in Kant. Kant explains the formal connection between a thinking ego and its thoughts, but not the ground of the significance of that formal connection. Very simply stated, we do not know, in the cognitive *or* intuitive senses of the term, the point to the formal connection. We do not know why the world is accessible to our intelligence, i.e. as a world. We do not know things as they are in themselves. We do not know ourselves or why we do what we ought to do. Even moral obligation is grounded firmly in conscience or a sense of human dignity. I could not respect myself as a rational being if I did not obey the commands of the categorical imperative. Man gives himself value by virtue of a good will.[26] But the good will is essentially a willing that there be a God:

> The righteous man may indeed say: I *will* that there be a God, that my existence in this world be also an existence beyond the natural

> chain in a pure world of the understanding, finally also, that my duration be endless: I persist in these beliefs and will not let anyone take them away from me. For this is the only case in which my interest, because I may not relax anything of these beliefs, inevitably determines my judgment, without paying any attention to sophistries, however little I am able to answer them, or to oppose them with others more apparent.[27]

5 THE IDENTITY OF TIME AND ETERNITY

I referred above to Kant's recognition of the humanly unsatisfactory character of his teaching. Unless we assume or hope that human beings are morally improving, the human comedy becomes a farce.[28] Rousseau showed that history exposes an unresolved conflict of intelligence and moral virtue. Kant asks us to believe that, on the contrary, history is moving towards the infinitely distant resolution of this conflict. Human passion or selfishness is, in Hegel's phrase, the cunning of reason, and enlightened self-interest will one day guide us to universal peace or a world state.[29] Kant's essays on history suggest, then, that it possesses a dialectical structure which will finally justify God's ways before man as a finite historical individual. Rousseau taught that intelligence is itself a product of the historical development. If we combine Rousseau's doctrine of the historical nature of intelligence with Kant's hope for a dialectical history, we possess the simple basis for understanding the genesis of Hegel's peculiar form of historicism. What needs to be shown is that the transcendental ego manifests itself within human history as the summation of its dialectical development, not in the infinite future, but now, in the eternal present of Hegel's own time and thought. This is not simply a theodicy in historical terms, although it is that as well.[30] More radically, it is a resolution of the dualism between form and content, or eternity and temporality, and so it is the development of a new speculative logic which explains the process of human history as the actualization of eternity.

Let us follow Hegel and call an 'empiricist' anyone who denies the discursive and complete accessibility of the eternal within time. 'History' then refers to the process by which man becomes progressively aware, within time, of the complete structure of eternity. To the empiricist, on the other hand, i.e. *to everyone other than Hegel*, history is indeed a farce, and not simply on moral grounds. Mathematics, logic and science, the proudest fruits of human reason, are transformed into historical creatures, which not only fail to account for their own or their creators' significance, but undergo internal limitations arising from the nature of pre- (and post-) Hegelian logic, limitations that preserve for ever the

dualism of form and content, but that also vitiate our conception of form by paradoxes and antinomies for which only *ad hoc*, arbitrary or stipulative remedies are available.

Hegel's ahistorical historicism does not arise from a sentiment of existence, from the tragic sense of life, or indeed from the surrender to the necessity of the internal limitations of formalism. Neither can we understand it as due to the modern rejection of classical philosophy, with the consequent emphasis upon passion, mastery, technology, and so the invention of history as a dimension of existence, indeed, as *the* dimension of existence. The only adequate way in which to approach the roots of Hegel's teaching is to understand it as a radical and comprehensive effort to overcome the aporiai intrinsic to classical thought, as well as those of the Christian tradition. Hegel's 'modernism' amounts finally to this: the ancients tell us to know ourselves, but then add that we can know ourselves only if we know nature as a whole. The route to the knowledge of nature is a self-forgetting, and the result of taking that route is impasse or failure. Hegel attempts to carry out the original directive of classical thought. He intends to make philosophy into the rose in the cross of the present by transforming philosophy into wisdom, and the temporal present into the synthesis of eternity and temporality.

Hegel's 'classicism' can be expressed as follows. For the Greeks generally, and for Plato in particular, wisdom meant primarily *phronēsis*: not just 'practical intelligence' but 'good judgment'. A judgment is not a proposition, but the act by which a living intelligence sees that a given individual must be classified under a form that is not empirically available. Kant, in the Third Critique, call this 'reflecting judgment'. In reflecting judgment, the person who judges is separate from the object as well as the universals under which it is subsumed. The judgment does not determine the object either sensuously or by the categories of the understanding. We see here, in the special Kantian context and terminology, the classical separation of finite man from the forms by which he analyses the objects of his experience. In Plato, the forms are finally separated from the analytical intelligence. In Aristotle, they are accessible to the intelligence, but the latter is discursively or conceptually inaccessible to itself: there is no logical account of the divine or active intellect. Kant transforms the active intellect into the transcendental ego, but in so doing he fails to explain the relation between the analytically thinking individual and his essential or noumenal self. The capacity to judge must therefore be interpreted *as if* we possessed an explanation of the relation between the phenomenal and the noumenal, i.e. between the forms and the content of our thoughts. Imbedded within the 'as if' or 'ought to be' is the continuing separation of knower and known or subject and object. Therefore, ordinary experience, the *Lebenswelt*, *doxa* or empirical history, each remains fundamentally a domain of illusion. Hegel's entire

teaching is an attempt to justify and explain the comprehensive domain of experience within which all philosophical analysis begins. He thus attempts to 'save the phenomena' or to complete the process initiated by the Greeks. It is easy enough to dismiss this attempt as Faustian, but to do this and nothing more is certainly to condemn oneself to the perpetual alienation that Hegel attempted to overcome. A thoughtless return to antiquity is no remedy for the absence of a rational explanation of history. Thoughtless returns are always turnings away from oneself.

Notes

1 This paper originated as a lecture that was delivered at Northern Illinois University, Temple University, and Trinity College (Hartford).

2 *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1951), I, 31.

3 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), II, ii, 72.

4 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 66, 198.

5 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 203.

6 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 111.

7 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 231.

8 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 208.

9 *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 535; moments of *Geist* find their rest only in totality: p. 549: religion is incomplete, has only a *Vorstellung* of itself as God: p. 558: *Geist*, as time, is incomplete; p. 559: the development of *Geist* is a self-returning circle that has an end qua fulfilment.

10 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), II–IV, 881.

11 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II–IV, 74.

12 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II–IV, 75.

13 ibid.

14 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II–IV, 30.

15 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 558.

16 *Die Zunkunft der Versöhnung* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), p. 149.

17 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* II, ii, 178.

18 *Enzyklopädie* (1830), ed. Nicolin-Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969), paragraph 258, p. 209.

19 This has nothing to do with Aristotle's conception of time as explained in the *Physics*, contrary to Heidegger's interpretation in *Sein und Zeit*.

20 *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955), pp. 209f.

21 *Enzyklopädie*, paragraphs 416–39, pp. 346–54.

22 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955), *Vorrede*, p. 17.

23 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, p. 16.

24 *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1956), paragraph 77, p. 276.

25 *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, p. 275.

26 *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, p. 313.

27 *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 164.

28 'Theorie und Praxis', in *Kleinere Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie Ethik und Politik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1959), pp. 108f.

29 For discussion of this point and references, see my *Nihilism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

30 *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, II–IV, 93f.: 'this is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history'.

World history as the progress of consciousness: an interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history[1]

Stephen Houlgate

I

In this paper I wish to consider the following sentence from Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history: 'World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom, – a progress whose necessity it is our business to comprehend.'[2] I wish to consider this sentence because it seems to me to lie at the heart of two important misunderstandings of Hegel's philosophy of history. On the one hand, the statement that world history is the progress of the *consciousness* of freedom has led some – notably Marxists – to argue that Hegel's is a one-sided, idealist view of history, which, for all its dialectical subtlety, ignores the important role played by material, economic factors in historical development. On the other hand, the statement that this progress must be comprehended as *necessary* has led others – Nietzsche, for example – to see Hegel as denying the importance of human agency in history and as positing some kind of mysterious world-spirit as the cosmic puppet-master of historical change. Both of these criticisms, in my view, are based on misinterpretations of Hegel's project in the philosophy of history, and both, I believe, can be avoided if we pay close attention to what Hegel actually means by the sentence cited above.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to consider first of all why Hegel claims that world history is the necessary progress of the consciousness of freedom, and then to show that, contrary to what many of his critics assert, Hegel's view leads him neither to ignore the material, economic side of human life, nor to downplay the importance of human agency in history. To conclude, I will suggest that Hegel's understanding of history as the development of the *consciousness* of freedom helps us understand what his conception of the so-called 'end of history' entails. I should stress before I proceed that my main interest in this paper is in the

connection between consciousness and history, rather than in the details of Hegel's conception of freedom. I apologize therefore if not enough is said in this paper about what Hegel actually means by freedom.

The claim that Hegel makes in the philosophy of history has two sides and can be analysed into two distinct but related claims. On the one hand, Hegel is saying that if we consider the nature of consciousness we will see that it is necessarily progressive and that this necessary progress of consciousness constitutes what we call history. On the other hand, he is saying that if we consider the meaning of the term 'history' we will see that history is necessarily the development of consciousness to freedom. Ultimately, of course, these two claims amount to the same thing, but Hegel presents arguments starting both from consciousness and from history, so we will look at each in turn.

We shall begin by examining Hegel's general conception of consciousness and trying to explain why he sees consciousness as both essentially historical and essentially progressive. The key to Hegel's position is his rejection of what he sees as the traditional metaphysical conception of the conscious subject or soul as a substantial entity or thing. Whereas Descartes thought of the subject as a thinking *thing*, Hegel follows Kant in thinking of the subject as act or activity – act, not in the sense of the synthesis of a given manifold, however, but in the sense of self-determination. Conscious subjectivity and thinghood are quite different from one another in Hegel's view because, unlike things, conscious subjectivity is not something whose determination is simply *given*. Conscious subjectivity is thus neither a given natural phenomenon whose determination is fixed by natural laws, nor a given metaphysical entity whose character is laid down by God. In fact, a defining characteristic of consciousness is that it is not anything given, immediate or fixed at all, but that it *produces* itself in time. It is true that the essence of consciousness is determined by absolute reason or the divine 'Idea' in Hegel's view, but consciousness is determined by absolute reason to be essentially *self-determining*:

> To say that spirit exists would at first seem to imply that it is a completed entity (*etwas Fertiges*). On the contrary, it is by nature active, and activity is its essence; it is its own product, and is therefore its own beginning and its own end. Its freedom does not consist in static being (*in einem ruhenden Sein*), but in a constant negation of all that threatens to destroy (*aufheben*) freedom. The business of spirit is to produce itself, to make itself its own object, and to gain knowledge of itself; in this way it exists for itself.
>
> (Nisbet, p. 48; Lasson, v. 1, pp. 32–3)

The simplest answer to the question why Hegel sees consciousness as

essentially historical, therefore, is that he sees it as not simply fixed in its being, but as becoming what it is, as a temporal process of self-determination. Consciousness must be historical for Hegel because it is only what it is through temporal self-production and development. However, this only gives us half the answer, for we still want to know *why* we should think of consciousness as essentially temporal and self-productive. Furthermore, we also want to know why we should think of consciousness as essentially progressive. The reason that consciousness should be thought of as essentially progressive, however, becomes clear when we consider precisely why consciousness is by nature self-productive.

Self-production and self-determination constitute the essential character of consciousness for Hegel because, as he shows in the *Phenomenology*, human consciousness has the intrinsic tendency to become *self*-conscious, and developing self-consciousness, in Hegel's view, is identical with self-production. As consciousness becomes self-aware, Hegel claims, that which is known – the self – does not simply remain the fixed object of knowledge, but is itself changed by being known, because the self which is known is itself the self which becomes self-conscious. The self thus changes from simply being what it is to being both what it is and conscious of what it is, and it thus transforms itself in the process.[3] Increasing self-consciousness does not, therefore, merely involve an advance in the theoretical understanding of a given form of consciousness which remains constant, but involves an advance in theoretical understanding which itself actively transforms consciousness. Increasing self-consciousness thus necessarily entails the production of new modes of consciousness, and since consciousness by nature tends towards self-consciousness, it is necessarily self-productive. Conversely, the moment of self-production which characterizes consciousness and determines that it is temporal and historical in nature must be progressive, because it is generated by *increasing* self-awareness, leading ultimately to consciousness' becoming fully aware of its self-productive, self-determining character. Changes in consciousness, like changes in nature, can be generated by various natural or contingent factors and need not involve any particular progress; but the moment of temporal change or historicity which is intrinsic to consciousness, that is, which consciousness must by its very nature exhibit, is generated by consciousness' increasing self-awareness and thus is necessarily progressive.[4]

In Hegel's view, human consciousness generates various conceptions of itself which reflect our greater or lesser understanding of our own self-productive nature, and these different levels of self-awareness constitute the fundamental ground out of which different forms of objective human society are produced. World history, then, is the process whereby these forms of self-awareness and their corresponding forms of social organization are generated and succeed one another in time.

But how exactly is something like *history* produced by this process? The answer to this question can be found if we consider a further aspect of Hegel's conception of the development of self-consciousness. Hegel maintains that human beings organize themselves into various forms of community. The earliest and most primitive forms of social organization were those suited to nomadic ways of life or to primitive agriculture. Such forms of social organization were based mainly on natural relations between people, such as family relations, and were thus, Hegel says, largely patriarchal in character (see Nisbet, pp. 156, 158; Lasson, pp. 183–4). As human self-consciousness developed, however, forms of human social organization emerged which were held together less by natural relations and more by consciously created bonds, such as laws. Communities whose bonds are conscious and willed, rather than merely natural, and which seek to protect the whole population within a defined territory, are called by Hegel 'states'. States constitute the material of history for Hegel because they are the objective product of human self-conscious activity in time and are the context within which we develop and produce our finest artistic, scientific and technological achievements.

Now states, for Hegel, are not natural phenomena, but artificial creations. Furthermore, they are artificial creations which have a primarily *ideal* existence, that is to say, they exist in and are sustained by the element of consciousness. Clearly, states have an external, physical dimension to them in that they are organizations of concrete human beings, in that physical force plays a role in ensuring the integrity of the community, and in that the natural character of the people concerned colours the character of the society. However, a community can only be considered a proper *state* when it is held together not by mere force or natural allegiance, but by consciously willed law (see Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, §432, Addition). Such laws are ideal in the sense that they exist only when willed and articulated by conscious human beings. The identity, therefore, of the state qua state – that is, qua self-conscious community – is only for consciousness. If people lose sight of it or neglect it, it will disappear. For this reason, laws have to be not only enshrined in custom and habit, but also given explicit, self-conscious expression in language, and, more particularly, objectified in the form of *writing* so that they can be passed on in a clear and determinate form from one generation to the next and thus ensure the continuity of the state's identity. Custom may preserve the continuing practices of the community, and an oral tradition may keep alive the community's past actions and achievements, but it is writing which actually *fixes* the community's past actions and achievements in the consciousness of the people and thus enables it properly to preserve its awareness of its past and deepen its sense of identity over time. States, in Hegel's view, thus need to maintain an awareness of their

own history in order to know what they are and what their deepest aspirations and most valuable endeavours have been.[5]

> It is the state which first supplies a content which not only lends itself to the prose of history but actually helps to produce it. Instead of the merely subjective dictates of authority – which may suffice for the needs of the moment – a commonwealth in the process of coalescing and raising itself up to the position of a state requires formal commandments and laws, i.e. general and universally valid directives. It thereby creates a record of its own development, and an interest in intelligible, determinate, and – in their results – enduring deeds and events, on which Mnemosyne, for the benefit of the perennial aim which underlies the present form and constitution of the state, is impelled to confer a lasting memory.
>
> (Nisbet, p. 136; Lasson, p. 145)

Because the state does not rest secure on an already given natural foundation, but is produced over time by the community coming to know itself, the state must preserve the stages of its concrete historical self-production in writing. It must write its own history as it develops. Indeed, the more the state extends its sense of itself and becomes aware of its indebtedness to past cultures, the more it will interest itself in the broader historical context into which it fits.

We must write history, therefore, to preserve and extend our consciousness of who we are. But writing history, we must remember, is not merely the contemplative, theoretical activity of interpreting and evaluating past events. It is part of the continuing *practical* activity of defining, producing and sustaining a society's identity. In writing history we do not merely reflect on what we were; we generate our present consciousness of what we are, too.[6]

Similarly, Hegel thinks that states such as ancient Rome and modern France, Britain and Germany, which have all developed a strong sense of their own histories and of the historical tradition to which they belong, have actually *created* that tradition in the process. Hegel maintains that the earliest states such as China or India form a logical continuity for the philosopher, but that, in spite of the cultural contact that there may have been between them, they do not form any conscious, unified historical tradition of development for themselves (see Lasson, p. 415). With Persia, Greece and Rome, however, there begins the creation of a genuine historical tradition – a self-conscious continuity of cultural influence and a definite sense in the states themselves that they constitute a development or progression beyond the states that they surpass. The development of self-consciousness thus not only produces states which write history and think of themselves as forming one continuous tradition; it

produces a series of states which do actually form one continuous tradition, precisely because they see themselves as advancing beyond the one that precedes them and as benefiting from previous cultural achievements. We should also note that such a tradition of historical developments is produced only because states need to define and sustain their *self-conscious* identity in relation to their past.

A mere succession of events which are not carried out with a clear consciousness of their relation to past events are not carried out with any clear consciousness of their *historical* significance and thus cannot be said to form a self-conscious historical tradition. Therefore, Hegel says, although great changes and revolutions occur in human prehistory, only those states that are aware of their history actually have a history, actually act in a historically self-conscious way and build their future out of a knowledge of the past. This view, of course, raises the question of Hegel's understanding of the meaning of the word 'history' – the second of the two points mentioned above as in need of consideration. We have seen that consciousness is intrinsically historical in Hegel's conception, and have begun to see that history itself is essentially the product of the development of self-consciousness. We must now look in more detail at Hegel's understanding of the meaning of the word 'history' itself.

When Hegel considers the word 'history' (*Geschichte*), he points out that it combines both a subjective and an objective meaning, 'for it denotes the *historia rerum gestarum* as well as the *res gestae* themselves, the historical narrative and the actual happenings, deeds and events' (Nisbet, p. 135; Lasson, pp. 144–5). Hegel adds that this conjunction of meanings is not to be regarded as contingent; rather, he says, 'we must in fact suppose that the writing of history and the actual deeds and events of history make their appearance simultaneously, and that they emerge together from a common source' (Nisbet, p. 135; Lasson, p. 145). That common source, as we have just seen, is, in Hegel's view, the *state* which generates historical actions and historical writing together because its actions are always carried out with explicit consciousness of their relation to the continuing past, present and future aims of the community. The word 'history', for Hegel, does not therefore simply refer to the whole course of events that have occurred in the past. Rather, as O'Brien notes (pp. 64, 105), the word 'history' refers to a special subset of past events, namely, those which can be regarded as self-recording, self-narrating and, therefore, self-conscious actions. Historical activity is activity which narrates itself and records its own significance as it proceeds. It is *conscious* of its own significance in relation to the past and the future. For that reason it is activity that is consciously purposeful and goal-directed.

As O'Brien shows in his third chapter, here lies the great difference between historical and natural change for Hegel. Nature perhaps pursues an unwritten, immanent purpose, and certainly obeys unwritten,

immanent laws, but it is not conscious of where it is coming from or where it is heading. It has no clear consciousness of its historical genesis and cannot, therefore, understand its actions in the light of that genesis. Nature's activity is therefore not for itself, but is blind.

The story of humanity, for Hegel, is the story of our emergence out of the darkness of nature into the light of history, out of determination by natural laws into the realm of self-conscious self-determination. (Variations of this same story are told, of course, by, among others, Kant, Marx and Nietzsche.) This process, Hegel stresses, involves the development of self-consciousness at all levels of human existence – at the levels of religion, art, politics, economics and historical writing. The process is not under total human control, but it is not blind either, for it involves the progressive formulation of conscious goals and purposes and the progressive working out in theory and practice of how to realize them.

History is therefore, for Hegel, essentially progressive, developing through the production of new levels of self-consciousness and new forms of social organization. Nature, on the other hand, is, in Hegel's view, governed by constant laws, and exhibits merely the eternal, circular repetition of instances of those laws. Whatever 'novelty' or change does occur in nature – and Hegel does not deny the reality of such change – it always reflects the same enduring principles of natural change. It does not generate new principles out of which change may occur. Only the production of new forms of self-conscious activity in history achieves this (see Nisbet, pp. 124–5; Lasson, p. 128). Attempts to understand history in terms of eternal fundamental principles (such as Schopenhauerian 'will'), constant 'laws' or circular patterns are thus misplaced from the start, from Hegel's perspective, because they do not see that what defines history as *history* is the *progressive* generation of historical self-awareness.

The difference Hegel sees between nature and history also helps us to identify more clearly the goal of historical development. Once more, O'Brien has stated this point well: 'Hegel judges', he says, 'that in *real* history (not in natural history) we are not interested in the individual as a repetition of the type, but as something new and different' (p. 55). In nature, therefore, the individual is important only as an instance of a general type, and the life of the individual is subordinated to the survival of the species. As history develops and we become more self-conscious, more self-aware, however, we become interested in human individuality in and for itself. This is because we become increasingly conscious that we are essentially self-productive beings and that *free*, self-conscious self-production is the ultimate goal of our historical activity. The aim of human history, therefore, is to free us from subordination to natural laws which are indifferent to our individuality, and to generate human laws and communities which respect and promote that individuality.

We become interested in individuality for its own sake in three import-

ant ways when we become more self-conscious and more historical. First of all, we seek guarantees for the rights of individuality within the state. Second, we seek to respect the individuality of other states through international law. Third, we seek to respect the individuality of other cultures that are historically and geographically different from our own by attending to the historical or geographical specificity of other cultures, that is by seeking to grasp their specific view of the world, rather than understand them in terms of one reductive set of categories (see Nisbet, pp. 176–7; Lasson, pp. 207–8). The individual is never abstracted out of context by Hegel. We must therefore always understand the individual person as produced by a social, political and religious context, and as having duties and responsibilities towards that context which may even demand the loss of individuality by the loss of life. Similarly, we must recognize the limits of individual historical and geographical cultures and confront the tragic truth – a truth that is so dangerous in the hands of the unscrupulous – that some forms of human civilization may have to die as other, freer and more self-conscious forms of civilization emerge. Nevertheless, despite the terrible violence done to human individuality in history, the aim of history, as O'Brien puts it, is ultimately 'to maximize *self*-consciousness; the development of individuality is the only aim that history could have' (p. 114).

II

How can we draw on this conclusion to meet the two criticisms mentioned at the beginning of the paper, namely, that Hegelian history is the work of an all-powerful, cosmic *Geist*, rather than of human activity, or that Hegelian history is the history of mind in abstraction from material human needs?

The first of these two points can be met by stressing that when Hegel says history is the history of consciousness or spirit, he means nothing other than *human* consciousness. 'The universal spirit (*der allgemeine Geist*) is essentially present as human consciousness', Hegel says. 'Knowledge attains existence and being for itself in man. The spirit knows itself and exists for itself as subject, and its nature is to posit itself as immediate existence: as such, it is human consciousness (*so ist er menschliches Bewußtsein*)' (Nisbet, p. 95; Lasson, p. 92). Hegel's history of spirit or *Geist* is, therefore, as Duncan Forbes puts it, 'a history of civilization' (Nisbet, p. xxii). *Weltgeist* – world-spirit or world-consciousness – is not a metaphysical entity or subject which exists prior to human history and which then enters into the historical process. Rather, *Weltgeist* comes to be in human history; it is produced and generated in human history. At the beginning of history, Hegel insists, spirit is only an infinite potentiality

or possibility (*Möglichkeit*) which 'contains its absolute substance as something as yet *implicit* (*als Ansich*), as the object and goal which it only attains as the end result in which it at last achieves its realization' (Nisbet, p. 131; Lasson, p. 137). *Weltgeist* is therefore what emerges and comes to be in human history; it is only a fully concrete reality at the end of history when humanity has achieved full historical self-consciousness. *Weltgeist* is indeed nothing other than human consciousness become conscious of its own universality – conscious, that is, that it is the consciousness of *humanity* as such and not merely the consciousness of a particular culture or state. Once we realize that our value and identity lie not merely in our being Greek, Roman, French or German, but rather in our being *human*, in our enjoying human rights as such and in our forming part of human history as such, then our consciousness has developed a proper sense of universal, or world-, identity.

Initially, Hegel says, humanity has no sense of common identity in history, no self-conscious awareness of a common tradition of human development. There are only individual cultures such as China, India and Egypt with no common sense of purpose. Consequently, there is no developed world-consciousness or *Weltgeist*. This sense of world human identity and common historical purpose emerges slowly through the creation of the empires of Greece and Rome and the resultant extension of classical culture, and through the growth of the common spiritual tradition of Christian Europe. Finally, with the transformation of the Christian proclamation of universal human dignity into the modern secular insistence on universal human rights, and, Hegel might have added if he had lived in the twentieth century, with the setting up of political organizations such as the United Nations, we achieve a concrete, if not always universally accepted, consciousness of our universal, world-historical character and role. At this point, *Weltgeist* has at last come fully into being.

Humanity, therefore, is the sole agent in history for Hegel. There is no cosmic *Geist* outside and above human activity directing the course of history. 'The province of the spirit', as Hegel says, 'is created by man himself' (Nisbet, p. 44; Lasson, p. 27). The absolute dimension to Hegel's philosophy of history lies in the fact that human consciousness is understood by Hegel to fulfil the immanent purpose or idea of being itself, namely, to achieve self-consciousness. In humanity, the world itself, as it were, becomes self-conscious. Furthermore, human consciousness cannot simply follow any path that it chooses, but is subject to the 'cunning of reason', which determines that consciousness develop in certain specific ways. However, it must always be remembered that it is *human activity* which fulfils the purpose of being through bringing itself to full self-consciousness. The cunning of reason in history is thus nothing other than the absolute logic immanent in human activity itself. The necessity

governing humanity's development to freedom in history is not external to humanity, but is the necessary path of development which human activity itself generates and which is mediated by humanity's growing consciousness of it. Indeed the necessity informing human activity cannot be external to humanity for Hegel, because Hegel understands history precisely as the passage from determination by given, external, i.e. natural, forces, to free self-determination. The necessity which informs conscious human activity, and which determines that free self-determination must be realized in the rational, constitutional state, can thus be nothing other than the immanent logic of self-productive human activity itself, and is thus to be recognized by us as our own intrinsic truth. It is true that Hegel's *Science of Logic* articulates the structure of dialectical reason *before* nature and *Geist* are dealt with in the system. However, the *Logic* does not unfold a principle which 'exists' by itself prior to nature and human beings, and which pre-determines their character, as it were, from the outside. What the *Logic* articulates is the initial, purely abstract form of the dialectical rationality which, later in the system, is seen to be generated in and by nature and human *Geist* themselves.

The first of the two objections to Hegel's philosophy of history mentioned above seems, therefore, to be unfounded. What about the second of these objections, however, namely, that Hegel presents history as the product of the autonomous activity of consciousness and neglects to stress the role of material interest in human development? Once again, this seems to me to be a serious misreading of Hegel's theory of historical change. Hegel does indeed say that history is the development of consciousness to freedom, but he also stresses that conscious freedom emerges out of nature. Natural externality always remains the origin from which the development of consciousness starts and the context within which conscious freedom must be achieved. Individuals, however spiritually developed they may become, always remain, in Hegel's view, individuals with natural bodies and bodily needs. Similarly, historical cultures, for Hegel, are always situated in a given natural, geographical setting which may either promote or hamper their development in various ways. In some cases, indeed – namely, in the 'torrid and frigid regions' (Nisbet, p. 155; Lasson, p. 182) – Hegel thinks that geographical conditions are actually incompatible with the indigenous growth of spiritual freedom because 'in regions such as these, dire necessity can never be escaped or overcome; man is continually forced to direct his attention to nature' (Nisbet, p. 155; Lasson, pp. 181–2). Freedom emerges here, if at all, only through being brought in by foreign peoples such as the Europeans. Given his emphasis on the importance of geographical environment, therefore, Hegel can hardly be said, in this respect at least, to overlook the material conditions of human life.

Not only is consciousness rooted in a natural context for Hegel; in its

more immediate forms consciousness is itself 'material' in character. In the *Phenomenology*, for example, Hegel shows that the most immediate form of self-consciousness is desire; in the *Encyclopaedia* he shows that rational self-consciousness or *Geist* manifests itself not only as theoretical intelligence, but also as drive (*Trieb*), inclination (*Neigung*) and passion (*Leidenschaft*); and in the *Philosophy of Right* he shows that free will manifests itself as the system of economic needs. Hegel's point here is that our material desire and need are not merely physical, but are forms of immediate self-certainty, forms of immediate self-consciousness. Desire does not therefore constitute a base or foundation underlying and determining self-consciousness. Rather, desire is a mode of self-consciousness itself; it is self-consciousness in its immediacy.

To see history as the development of self-consciousness, therefore, is to see it as the development of human needs and desires and of the practical means of fulfilling those desires. Indeed, Hegel claims that, often in history, 'passions, private interests and the satisfaction of selfish impulses are the most potent force' (Nisbet, p. 68; Lasson, p. 57). Hegel's point, however, is that, as human self-consciousness develops, it does not remain at this merely immediate, material level. It does not cease being material either, but our material needs become situated in and informed by the growing 'spiritual' context of religion, politics, art and philosophy. This growing context of explicitly spiritual self-consciousness changes the character of our needs, changes the character of the social organization and material production required to meet those needs, and, as Hegel points out in the discussion of luxury and fashion in the *Philosophy of Right*, generates new needs which are not natural, but none the less real and pressing (see also Nisbet, pp. 147–8; Lasson, p. 162).

The development of self-consciousness for Hegel is not an abstract process riding free of our material productive activity, but entails the development of that material productive activity itself. Where Hegel's theory would differ from a more technological account of historical development – such as that of Marx – is simply in stressing that it is not technological progress or the development of productive forces which determines the forms of self-consciousness, but rather that technological and industrial progress itself takes place within the context of the development of self-consciousness. What is most important in determining the form of human society, therefore, is, in Hegel's view, the spirit informing society as a whole. There is consequently

> a great difference between a situation in which industry is restricted or tied to social castes so that it cannot expand, and one in which the individual is completely unrestricted and can extend the sphere of his activity without limit. The latter situation presupposes a completely different national spirit – and hence also a completely different religion

> and constitution – from that in which diligence, though equally necessary, is placed within fixed and final limits.
>
> (Nisbet, p. 114; Lasson, p. 115)

This view of the primacy of consciousness in history, we should note, is not merely of theoretical interest to Hegel, but colours his analysis of practical social problems as well. Problems in modern civil society, such as poverty, for example, are largely generated, in Hegel's view, by the attitude and consciousness that so often governs material production, namely, unsocialized egoism. The remedy for such problems thus lies not simply in revolution – though Hegel does not always rule that out – but essentially in the reform of attitudes through religion, education, law and political institutions such as the corporations. Without such reform of conscience, Hegel implies, revolutions in the organization of society will merely be external and ineffectual (see Lasson, pp. 931–2).

III

In this paper I have tried to analyse what is involved in Hegel's claim that history is the progress of consciousness, and to show that, understood properly, this claim does not leave Hegel open to two common objections to his philosophy. To conclude, I should like to add a few remarks about the consequences of his claim for an understanding of the 'end' or goal of history.

The ultimate end of the world in general, Hegel says, is the spirit's consciousness of its freedom. Freedom, he says, is by definition self-knowledge (see Nisbet, p. 55; Lasson, 40–1). The goal of history for Hegel is thus *self-consciousness*; it is not an ideal, utopian state, or some imagined perfect social harmony for all. But this does not mean, as Marx thought, that the goal of Hegelian history is to achieve mere theoretical consciousness of the nature of freedom while leaving concrete human socio-political existence languishing in alienation. The goal of history is to achieve consciousness of, and thus to realize, freedom at all levels of human existence – the political, social, economic, religious, aesthetic and philosophical levels. In other words, the goal of history is to bring the whole of human life – both its so-called material or practical level and its so-called theoretical level – into a form which, whatever its imperfections, essentially accords with mature, rational self-awareness.

Now, in Hegel's view, mature self-awareness is finally attained, and the education of the human race completed, when the true nature of human freedom is comprehended *philosophically*. This, he thinks, is achieved by his own speculative philosophy. Hegel's speculative philosophy, as is well known, is not meant simply to prescribe what ought to

be, but is meant to describe what is. It brings to conceptual clarity a form of mature human self-awareness and freedom that is already a reality at other levels of human existence. However, speculative philosophy is not meant simply to record what exists. Rather, it is meant to articulate the living work of reason within present existence. In terms of political life, therefore, the task of philosophy is to articulate the rational core of freedom manifest in modern constitutional states. For philosophy to be able to do this, modern states do not need to be perfectly free and rational in every detail. They must simply be *free enough* to be seen as essentially free, rational states and for their intrinsic rationale – the nature of modern freedom – to be recognized. For this reason, the philosophy of history – the part of Hegel's philosophy which is meant to show how the idea of freedom emerges as a historical reality – ends not with a perfect historical instantiation of the state of the *Philosophy of Right*, but with three modern states – France, England and Germany – which more or less imperfectly realize the idea of freedom, and in which, taken as a whole, the various elements of this idea, such as rights, civil society, public law-courts and so on, are present.

At the completion of history, therefore, no utopian perfection has been achieved, but, in one part of the globe at least, humanity has at last achieved a mature awareness of its freedom and has begun to live a life in accordance with that freedom. At the completion of history humanity has become self-conscious, has learned to understand itself and has acquired the proper categories to make sense of, and test the rationality of, all future historical change. This does not mean that Hegel thinks all worthwhile activity thereby comes to an end. His remarks on the political developments in France surrounding the 1830 Revolution and also regarding America indicate that there is a future in Hegel's world. The future, in Hegel's view, is open. What will happen, we cannot predict. However, that future cannot confront us with anything which we are not equipped to understand.[7] In his own philosophy and in the Christian religion Hegel believes the truth finally to have been revealed. But that does not mean that history stops. It means that we have now begun to live a mature life in the full consciousness of that truth, and that we now have the power and the self-awareness to continue to live in freedom if we so choose. That is up to us. As Richard Winfield puts it:

> As thinkers, it is our task to conceive the structures of right in the self-grounding discourse of philosophy. As citizens, it is our responsibility to erect and safeguard a self-grounded state of freedom. Because the reality of justice can always be overturned if enough individuals choose to do so, the history of freedom is always an open one in practice. It may be theoretically conceivable once and for all, but its realization in practice is an ever present political task.[8]

History, for Hegel, is completed, therefore, when it has brought human practice to a mature self-understanding which enables us to sustain, deepen and extend our freedom in the full consciousness of what true freedom means, rather than in the light of partial or even false conceptions of freedom. Human *consciousness* of freedom has undoubtedly progressed, in Hegel's view, and in the modern age – the age following the Reformation and, more specifically, the French Revolution – it has reached its goal of full self-awareness and self-transparency. Moreover, the modern spirit of free self-determination has created constitutional states in which people can enjoy unprecedented liberty. However, as his criticisms of modern subjectivism and particularism show, Hegel is by no means complacent about the modern world in which he lives. Hegel's claim that history is the progress of the *consciousness* of freedom is not, therefore, a claim that sanctions complete self-satisfaction and political or practical inaction. In fact, it is profoundly realistic because it warns us against confusing the idea of the progress of human self-understanding with the chimera of total human perfectibility. It reminds us, therefore, that although we have progressed in our awareness of what freedom is, and have created a world of freedom out of that awareness, we must always take account of the gap that can open up between consciousness and its realization.

This in turn makes us aware, as Forbes says, that 'the political/moral freedom possible in the state is only a relative freedom [and that] . . . there must therefore be a transition from Objective *Geist* to Absolute *Geist*' (Nisbet, p. xxvii). Such a transition is important, not only because consciousness of absolute truth in art, religion and philosophy is an end in itself, but because without that consciousness and without our desire to transform our world in the light of the universal, spiritual principles enshrined above all in religion, there would have been no such thing as history in the first place.

Notes

1 I would like to thank all those people who commented on this paper at the annual conference of the Hegel Society of Great Britain at Oxford in September 1986, where it was first presented, especially Stephen Bosworth (Portsmouth Polytechnic), many of whose emendations have found their way into the final version.

2 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, trans by H. B. Nisbet, with an introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge: Cambrdige University Press, 1975), p. 54; hereafter cited as 'Nisbet'. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. by Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Meiner, 1920), v. 1, p. 40; hereafter cited as 'Lasson'. Translations have been amended where appropriate.

3 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts: die Vorlesung von 1819/20 in einer Nachschrift* ed. by Dieter Henrich (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 280.

4 When one considers Hegel's claim that consciousness is *necessarily* historical and progressive, one needs to bear in mind two qualifications, which I can only mention here, but which would need to be dealt with more fully in a more extensive treatment of his philosophy of history. First, Hegel's claim is a minimal one. He does not assert that *all* individuals and cultures develop or progress in the same way (or even at all), but only that, because of its nature, consciousness has had to progress to full self-understanding *somewhere*. Many individuals and many cultures in fact do not learn or progress, in Hegel's view, but remain stuck at a relatively unsophisticated level of development. This is due to a variety of geographical and historical factors which a full account of Hegel's philosophy would need to explain. Second, even where progress does occur, it is never a simple matter for Hegel. Like Rousseau, he well realizes that progress itself frequently involves an element of loss or regress (as in the transition from the 'aesthetic' culture of Greece to the 'abstract' consciousness of Rome). Moreover, he is fully aware that progress is often bloody and tragic and, as our own century amply demonstrates, often frighteningly precarious. However, Hegel insists that, amidst and sometimes *through* all the horrors of historical existence, humanity has progressed – and has had to progress – to deeper and deeper levels of self-understanding.

5 Writing was important for Hegel as the medium of historical consciousness, because he saw it as enabling us to fix the temporal character of past events in a way in which monuments and paintings could not. In the twentieth century, however, one would have to consider whether magnetic tape and film do not perform a similar function to writing.

6 See George Dennis O'Brien, *Hegel on Reason and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 35: 'the struggle for human self-definition that is the basic raison d'être of historical writing'. Hereafter cited as 'O'Brien'.

7 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), p. 252, § 127, Addition: 'the future is not absolute but ever exposed to accident'; and Nisbet, p. 38; Lasson, p. 19: 'Armed with the concept of reason, we need not fear coming to grips with any subject whatsoever.'

8 Richard Dien Winfield, 'The Theory and Practice of the History of Freedom: On the Right of History in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*', in *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. by Robert L. Perkins (Albany: SUNY, 1984), p. 143.

Philosophy of Art

The contemporary relevance of Hegel's aesthetics*

Dieter Henrich

Hegel's relevance is disputed least of all in the realm of the theory of art. With the exception of some decades in the nineteenth century, his course of lectures on aesthetics (he never wrote a work on the philosophy of art) has continually exerted a considerable influence upon discussions of the fundamental questions of aesthetics and of their applications. This can be explained by two peculiar features of his theory.

I

One of them is Hegel's remarkable attitude towards the potentialities of art in the modern world and to the future of art. Hegel conceived his philosophy of art at a time when artists were honoured with the highest of expectations. His contemporaries hoped for a poetry which could emulate the Greeks, basing their hopes on the heights which poetic works had already attained. The important poets of the age and, following in their train, the painters and composers as well, were confident almost without exception that art could bring into operation humanity's insights into its situation and the course of its history, and that it could do so with a competence rivalling that of Homer and Sophocles. Philosophers at the turn of the century, Schelling in particular, endorsed this judgment and this hope.

Not so Hegel. He sharply opposed the general opinion of his age and of his friends about the prospects for art, and maintained that art could no longer be the expression of truth, the medium of man's insight into the main features of the world from which he comes and in which he lives. Up to 1828 his thesis of the end of art sounded even harsher than in the discussion which followed the publication of the lectures.[1] For until then Hegel had maintained in a literal sense the necessity of the decay

of art and of its end as the inevitable result of the overall situation and of the development of the arts.[2] This emerges when we compare the separate sets of lecture notes. Hegel's original thesis is camouflaged in the text of the edition of his works, because this edition provides only a compilation of lecture notes from different years. Thus we find in it a forecast of the art of the future which is strictly incompatible with the systematic structure of Hegel's aesthetics. He also says, it is true, that we cannot hope for the epic of the modern world[3] – the epic of which Lukács later spoke in his theory of the novel[4] – that there will thus be no art which can accommodate the modern world in its form. But he does expect a less impressive artistic modernity, which (as Kuhn said in his lecture) enthrones a new saint who does not appear in the calendar of saints – *Humanus*,[5] the form of humanity which has become at home in its environment, which has got beyond the difference between subjective experience and the coercive character of institutions, and which produces from this awareness works that no longer bring the world to intuition[6] but emerge from the knowledge of what is actual. This would be an art of intimacy, an art which makes everything past familiar and intelligible to itself, which also still playfully introduces into the peripheral, into the incidental, the certainty that the world cannot ultimately be characterized by rupture and estrangement. This diagnosis of Biedermeier art,[7] which is accompanied by a justification of the historicism of mid-nineteenth-century art, is in fact a clear-sighted accommodation on Hegel's part to the development of art during his years in Berlin,[8] perhaps also to his own role in the recently established art society. To the last Hegel did not summon up the courage to do what the consistency of his system required, to condemn all the artistic production of his time as the decaying remnants of art itself.

Both of Hegel's positions – the doctrine of the effective end of art and the late, restrained justification of relativized artistic possibilities in the future – were sufficiently remote from general preconceptions to function as provocative and also as inspiring theses. Hardly anywhere else does Hegel's characteristic modernity stand out so sharply as here. Thus the thesis of the end of art also became the model for the Left-Hegelian doctrine of the end of religion.[9] The art which still remains possible must be either incidental or retrospective, but in both variants it is, as it were, the art of scholars. For it can only emerge from an insight which cannot be acquired in the creative process itself and must therefore precede it. If art itself can no longer be theory, yet it is required of the artist that he become a theorist.

Hegel's theses compel us to ask whether they are correct or not. If one questions them, then one will first of all attribute the responsibility for their occurrence to the very foundations of Hegel's aesthetics: (1) the theory is so constructed as to make it impossible to gain a fruitful relation-

ship to modern art. But one can also (2) defend the theory against its own application and ascribe to it a potentiality in application which goes beyond what Hegel himself was able to see.[10] One can even recognize this potentiality at work in the circumstance that Hegel proceeded to correct his own prognosis, even if, after his self-revision, he still misunderstood the true character of art at the end of its independence from theory. But if one prefers to retain the radicalism of Hegel's original doctrine of the end of art, then one can still (3) find sense in his prognosis, a sense which only emerges, of course, if the text of the prognosis is paraphrased. One can suppose that Biedermeier and historicism are only the first forms of the decline of art from a source of insight to the mastered medium of sensitivity[11] devoid of insight, a medium which, between experiment and decoration, reveals both the fundamental significance of intuition in our lives and its suspension in the modern life-world.

Two of these theses were represented, in substance, in the symposium. Kuhn tried to show that it is a defect in the foundations of Hegel's aesthetics which prevents him from entering into a fruitful relationship to the art of this century or in fact to the work of art in general. Kuhn made a proposal of his own – available in some of his other publications – for the construction of a theory of art which will avoid this consequence.

Hofstadter, by contrast, represented the view that Hegel's prognosis is correct. Only he put the end of art too early in time. The process of the disintegration of art is still under way. Art still survives today, an art which is based on subjectivity, and has lost all awareness of inclusion in a world that can be captured in forms. So it rushes around in all kinds of experiments, experiments which can depend only on programmes and effects.

This conflict dominated the discussion, but it could not be resolved. Other alternatives too could have been considered. But Hegel's thesis of the end of art and his other doctrine about the particularistic art of the future, a doctrine which makes Greece inimitable and yet abruptly opposes the classicism of his bourgeois environment, will retain their vitality. Their paradigmatic force derives – despite their weaknesses – from a theory which was able to comprehend the functioning of art in its relationship to and understanding of the world more discriminatingly than any of its successors.

II

The other aspect of Hegel's philosophy of art which remains relevant is just this theory itself. Our symposium only touched on this. Hegelian aesthetics appears in a protean form. Early on, Hegel's pupils had reason to complain that this philosophy of art is, in the manner in which Hegel

presents it, hard to distinguish from art history. In the text of the lectures interpretation follows interpretation, in which the theme is what one can only call the content and significance of a work. But modern interpretative techniques are based primarily on the analysis of form. No aesthetic can carry conviction today if it does not legitimate and explain the possibility of this type of interpretation. But Hegel's aesthetic seems to develop in sovereign, or ignorant, indifference to this analytical potential, the elements of which were already beginning to be provided by the science of aesthetics in the middle of the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, the conceptual structure[12] on which Hegel's aesthetic is based and in which what is represented in the work (Hegel calls it the 'ideal') is to be comprehended can itself only be formulated in a vocabulary which comes very close to that of formal aesthetic theory. The surface meaning of Hogarth's formula 'Unity in variety'[13] can, it seems, be translated into the Hegelian formula 'Universality in agreement with particularity'.[14] From this there emerges an appearance of ambivalence in Hegel's theory, an appearance which is by no means only superficial: on the one hand it offers a theory of the meaning of the work, an aesthetic of content more rigorous than anything comparable before or since, while on the other hand the content which appears is defined purely as form. This ambivalence gives significance to two enterprises which concern Hegel, and can shed light on him, in different ways.

The first is the clarification of the theoretical form of the course of his philosophy of art, of the potential and the limits of its conceptual framework. This clarification has not taken place so far, and this is due in part to the remarkable diversity of the fertile reactions to Hegel's aesthetics. One finds philosophers of art of all shades who are convinced that they are inspired by Hegel, but whose positions have simply nothing in common with each other. In this important area too, and especially so, Hegel's successors reveal the narrow confines of our understanding of Hegel up to now.

In the other enterprise Hegel functions as a point of reference for possible self-understanding in the theory of art. Every theory of art has to ask the question how we are to conceive the connection between, on the one hand, the instrumental resources for formal organization, resources which have become only apparently uncertain in the most recent development of art, but remain in fact instruments of the self-criticism of artists, and, on the other hand, the point of view, which without a doubt is also still in force, that art always possesses and requires a definite significance of mediation, or, one can safely say, of insight – and this implies a relationship to states of consciousness and to historical conditions which can by no means be defined in terms of the formal instrumental resources alone. Whenever the question of this connection is raised we have a reason for returning to Hegel, who manifestly brought

both aspects together, but did so in a manner which is hard to make perspicuous and which, for that very reason, serves as a medium for an effort towards further clarification. A well-defined relationship to Hegel's aesthetics always amounts at the same time to a definition of the position which one believes to be appropriate in the theory of art.

III

Current interest in Hegel also derives, however, from a third element, which also featured in our discussion: Hegel's thesis that art is coming to an end goes together with a disavowal of what was once his finest hope – the return of a political system and a form of social life which requires and deserves aesthetic predicates ('Beautiful world, where art thou? Return again . . .').[15] The circle of young men in Tübingen[16] had been convinced that such a world could return, a world in which art would revert to the dimensions of the metaphysical, and that it was the task of the age to work towards this return. This was the Rousseauism of the early Hegel. The beautiful polity of the Greek state was the promise that the revolutionary act held for him – as it was too for many of the actual revolutionaries in France. His work was to bring this polity before our eyes; his whole philosophical endeavour was to be directed to the restoration of these conditions in changed circumstances.

Thus in the early Hegel we find the extension of an originally aesthetic system of categories to political conditions. This has a long history, a history initiated by Plato, for whom the *kalon* was more than just a concept of art and a concept of right conduct.[17] In the young Hegel hope for the future is theoretically grounded in an aesthetic of the political. Now despite Hegel's assurance that the ideals of his youth had only been transformed into the system, this important element in his youthful ideal disappeared with the development of the system – in connection, to be sure, with the reflections which have made Hegel, in an emphatic sense, the theorist of modernity and in which his acceptance of classical political economy played an important part.[18] These reflections convinced him that the modern world owes its rationality to connections which essentially cannot be described as beautiful. If the concept of the rational can no longer be defined in terms of aesthetic categories, then the possibility of a political aesthetic, a legacy of the Platonic tradition, disappears.

Clearly, then, this must be an important question concerning Hegel: was he right? Was this severance unavoidable? Its legitimacy is certainly authenticated by the fact that it came about in the course of self-revision and that it involved the dismissal of the hopes that originally motivated him. Hegel cannot be accused of lacking sensitivity to beautiful political conditions. In his lectures on the Greek world the force of his prose

emerges as nowhere else. The yearning which he experienced is not extinguished in the affirmation of its futility: if yearning were permitted, then it would be for that world, for that condition.[19] It was only insight which persuaded him of its irretrievability.

Yet the possibility remains that we shall want to pit a better insight against his, to offer once more to humanity hope for the beautiful life, and to describe in aesthetic categories the condition which is to come. We have heard Marcuse speak in terms of such categories.[20] Throughout the Frankfurt school the revision of Hegelian philosophy amounts in essence to a revision of this insight – Adorno's negative dialectic serves the same end.[21] This dialectic is the equipment which refuses to deny humanity its hope for beautiful conditions of life, conditions which can be comprehended in aesthetic categories. In the symposium this problem was raised by Lypp's paper.

Of all the questions concerning the theoretical problems of the philosophy of art and its most abstract concepts, no other can claim greater relevance to our life. We know Hegel's own reply to those who called for fidelity to hope: the modern world must be the world of *recollection*. In recollection our world knows the beautiful conditions, delivers them – in Schiller's fashion[22] – from the flight of time, while it discerns the continuity which also links them to a transformed present. But they have been supplanted in reality by other conditions, conditions whose nature excludes the sensory experience of harmony, but which are nevertheless intrinsically richer, more differentiated, and thus, in the Hegelian sense of the concept of truth, the 'true' conditions: the conditions of *right* or the rule of law.[23] Anyone who supposes that modernity in any of its possible forms, its concepts of freedom and its social system can be captured in aesthetic categories must realize that he is thereby preparing the ground for an assault on the rule of law. In another vocabulary: the pleasure principle has lost for ever the capacity to structure and communicate real universality.

The Frankfurt school, on the contrary – Marcuse as well as Adorno – affirms a new version of Rousseau's principle: the essence of man must be understood in terms of his hope for beautiful conditions of life. But since nothing can renounce its essence, man cannot renounce this hope. Thus both the motivation and the implications of Hegel's aesthetic mean that its fundamental problem cannot be confined within the boundaries of the theory of art alone.

Notes

* This paper was delivered at the conclusion of a symposium of Hegel's philosophy of art organized by Dieter Henrich and held at Stuttgart in 1970, and was

published in *Stuttgarter Hegel-Tage 1970* (*Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 11), ed. H.-G. Gadamer (Bonn, 1974), pp. 295–301. The other contributions to the symposium were: 'Die Gegenwärtigkeit der Kunst nach Hegels Vorlesungen über Asthetik', by H. Kuhn (op. cit., pp. 251–69); 'Die Kunst: Tod und Verklärung', by A. Hofstadter (op. cit., pp. 271–85); and 'Kritische Bemerkungen zu den Referaten von Kuhn und Hofstadter', by B. Lypp (op. cit., pp. 287–94). Hofstadter's paper also appeared, in English, as 'Art: Death and Transfiguration. A Study in Hegel's Theory of Romanticism', in *Review of National Literatures*, 1970 (1), pp. 149–64.

1 Hegel's lectures on aesthetics were posthumously edited by H. G. Hotho and published in 1835. Hotho based his text on some of Hegel's own lecture notes and on transcripts of the courses he gave in 1823, 1826 and 1828–9. A more recent edition of the lectures is translated by T. M. Knox as *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. For the doctrine of the end of art see, for example, *Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, p. 103: 'For us art counts no longer as the highest mode in which truth fashions an existence for itself. . . . We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit.'

2 On this see D. Henrich, 'Kunst und Kunstverein in Hegels bürgerlicher Welt', in *Bürger und Bilder: Festschrift des Kunstvereins Hannover 1982*, pp. 30–5.

3 *Aesthetics*, Vol. II, pp. 1109f.

4 Georg Lukác's *Die Theorie des Romans*, first published in 1916, is translated by A. Bostock as *The Theory of the Novel* (London, 1971).

5 Cf. *Aesthetics*, Vol. I, p. 607.

6 'Intuition' is the standard translation of *Anschauung* in philosophical contexts. There are, on Hegel's view, three 'realms of absolute spirit', or ways of apprehending the 'absolute' – art, religion and philosophy. They differ in the '*forms* in which they bring home to consciousness their object, the Absolute'. Art does so in the form of '*sensuous intuition*', religion in that of '*pictorial* thinking' (*Vorstellung*), and philosophy in that of '*free* [conceptual] thinking' (*Aesthetics*, Vol. I, p. 101).

7 'Biedermeier' was a satirical term, with a connotation of bourgeois Philistinism, applied to a style of decorative art which originated in Germany but spread throughout central Europe and lasted from about 1820 to 1860. The word was applied primarily to furniture and interior decoration, but it was extended to architecture and painting, and even to literature, to, for example, the novellas of the Austrian writer, Adalbert Stifter (1805–68). See further 'Biedermeier', by M. J. Norst, in *Periods in German Literature*, ed. J. M. Ritchie (London, 1966), pp. 147ff.

8 Hegel was professor of philosophy at Berlin from 1818 until his death in 1831.

9 The most famous expression of this doctrine is Ludwig Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* of 1841, translated by George Eliot as *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1957). See also *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, ed. L. S. Stepelevich (Cambridge, 1983).

10 Cf. D. Henrich, 'Art and Philosophy of Art Today, Reflexions with Reference to Hegel', in *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism* ed. R. E. Amacher and V. Lange (Princeton, 1979).

11 *Anschaulichkeit*. See n. 6 above.

12 On this, see Terry Pinkard's 'The Logic of Hegel's *Logic*' in Michael Inwood (ed.) *Hegel* (Oxford: OUP, 1985), pp. 85–109.

13 Hogarth presented his views in 1753 in *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. J. Burke (Oxford, 1955). He speaks of '*the beauty of a composed intricacy of form*' (p.

45) and advocates 'a composed variety: for variety uncomposed, and without design, is confusion and deformity' (p. 35). Burke states that this is 'the first work in European literature to make formal values both the starting-point *and* basis of a whole aesthetic theory' (p. xlvii).

14 See, for example, *Aesthetics*, Vol. I, pp. 476 ff.

15 'Schöne Welt, wo bist Du? – Kehre wieder . . .': line 89 of Schiller's *Die Götter Griechenlands* [*The Gods of Greece*] of 1788. See Friedrich Schiller, *Gedichte: Eine Auswahl*, ed. G. Fricke (Stuttgart, 1952), pp. 129–33, esp. p. 131. The poem is discussed by Hegel in *Aesthetics*, Vol. I, pp. 506–8.

16 Hegel was at Tübingen from 1788 to 1793, where he attended the theological seminary, together with Hölderlin and Schelling.

17 The Greek word καλός ('beautiful', 'noble', 'honourable', 'good') has what we tend to think of as a range of different meanings – aesthetic, functional, social, and moral – which cannot be captured by any single English word. Plato's most famous discussions of art, of the ideal society and of the relationships between them are contained in the *Republic*.

18 See, for example, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1952), pp. 126ff., and also *Hegel: An Introduction*, by R. Plant (2nd edn, Oxford, 1983), chap. IX.

19 This is an implicit quotation of a sentence from Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy: 'Wenn es erlaubt wäre, eine Sehnsucht zu haben, so nach solchem Lande, solchem Zustande' (*Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel, Vol. I, p. 173; *History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane, Vol. I, p. 150).

20 See, for example, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1955) and *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), and now also *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston, 1972) and *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston, 1978).

21 See Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London, 1973), and on the Frankfurt school in general, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, eds. A. Arato and E. Gebhardt (Oxford, 1978).

22 See n. 15 above.

23 See, for example, *Aesthetics*, Vol. I, pp. 10f., 103.

Extract from *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*

Andrew Bowie

HEGEL: THE BEGINNING OF AESTHETIC THEORY AND THE END OF ART

The reflexive Absolute

Most accounts of the history of German idealism see Hegel as making the vital steps towards a complete systematic philosophy which goes beyond the limitations of Fichte and Schelling.[1] Nowadays it is precisely this completeness that makes Hegel the target of philosophies whose aim is to deconstruct such pretension. My attention to those figures in German idealism and Romanticism, like Schelling, who reveal ways in which reflection fails to give philosophy a wholly transparent foundation, is intended to show that there always has been a 'deconstructive' tendency in modern philosophy; it is, though, one which is associated with other conceptions of subjectivity, not one which dispenses with the subject. Hegel's own acount of subjectivity involves important difficulties. In the present chapter I want to suggest that the way Hegel subordinates aesthetics to philosophy in his system leads to a conception of subjectivity which is unable to take account of the resistance of individual subjectivity to complete subsumption into philosophy.

Hegel's work on aesthetic theory appears paradoxical: he produced the most important systematic aesthetics of the nineteenth century at the same time as announcing the 'end of art' as an expression of the 'Absolute'. Hegel wants to make philosophy into the complete articulation of what is inherent in religion and art as expressions of truth. He is insistent, though, that religion and art do not themselves finally articulate the truth, and that philosophy is necessary to reveal the truth they contain.

Hegel's capacity for method is only equalled by Kant, which makes it hard to be fair to him in a short space. The complexity of Hegel's work

means that any approach to it is faced with fundamental hermeneutic problems. Objections to Hegel are often rejected by Hegelians on the basis that some other part of the system is able to cater for the objection. This leads to the situation where all one can do is to enter the textual labyrinth called 'Hegel' on the assumption that it has a centre. One cannot, of course, *know* in advance whether this is really the case: one has to assume it as an act of faith. It is arguable that Hegel himself assumes a centre of the labyrinth, called Reason, and then sets about showing us the way to it. Doing full justice to his attempt to show this path is impossible in the present context. My aim is to ask why the completion of Hegel's philosophy – what makes it a system – leads him to see aesthetics in the way he does.

Philosophy for Hegel, as it was for the other idealists, is the attempt to reveal how the process of thinking and the process of reality are ultimately identical. The question is *how* this is to be revealed. The early Schelling, as we saw, thought this revelation took place in art. Hegel confronts in a wholly original way the problem of how Mind or Spirit, *Geist*, articulates itself. As Fichte saw, if the I is wholly opposed to something else – the world, the object, matter, things-in-themselves – Kant's problems remain unsolved. We have already considered various attempts to solve Kantian problems. What is Hegel's contribution to these attempts?

Schelling's philosophy retains in varying ways, and continues to do so until his later philosophy, a sense that the postulated highest principle of philosophy, the 'Absolute', cannot be represented in conceptual thought, by 'reflection'. Even though Schelling ceases to regard art as the 'organ of philosophy', he never produces a system that is wholly transparent, where thought and being can be articulated as being the same by an overall concept. This leads Hegel to say of Schelling, in the midst of the latter's career, that 'if one is to ask for a final text in which his philosophy presents itself in its most definite development, one cannot name such a text' (*GP* III, p. 421).[2]

Hegel himself claims to achieve what Schelling does not. Hegel:

> The deficit in Schelling's philosophy is that he places the point of the indifference of subjective and objective at the beginning; this identity is set up absolutely, without it being proven that this is the Truth.
> (*GP* III, p. 435)

Hegel's claim is that he can prove the identity of subject and object, rather than postulate it, as Schelling does in 'intellectual intuition'. Such a philosophy would be able to begin without any presupposition which could not be articulated as part of the system, and would thus be able to integrate finite and infinite. The difference we are concerned with is,

then, between a philosophy founded on the conviction that the separation of thought and being is untenable, but which never fully squares this circle by proving how it is so in conceptual thought, and a philosophy which claims to have means to solve the problem by articulating it in a new kind of conceptuality.

Hegel's argument becomes easier to understand if one sees it in its historical context. The turn to the subject in modern philosophy parallels the development of modern individualism. Jürgen Habermas suggests the main contradiction involved, which German idealism tries to overcome:

> subjectivity reveals itself as a *one-sided* principle. It admittedly possesses the unprecedented power to produce a development of subjective freedom and subjective reflection . . . but it is not powerful enough to regenerate the religious power of unification via the medium of reason.[3]

Whereas religion and mythology give an *a priori* basis for action and reflection, which is necessarily shared by others, a culture grounded in the individual's freedom to think and act self-interestedly must necessarily generate conflicts. Who or what legislates on the issue of whether my freedom is not your enslavement?

The power of Hegel's philosophy lies in its demonstration of the need for mutual recognition as the ground of normativity in the modern world. Habermas again:

> The experience of self-consciousness . . . results for Hegel from the experience of the interaction in which I learn to see myself with the eyes of the other subject . . . only on the basis of mutual recognition does self-consciousness develop, which must be anchored in the reflection of my consciousness in the consciousness of another subject.[4]

In the light of what has been said so far about reflection the problem should already be apparent: how do I know that the reflection of *my* consciousness in the other is a reflection of my consciousness? The assumption has to be that it is only as reflected in the other that I become myself. But in what sense am I *my*self? The assumption must be that the already existing consciousness, which must already be there to be reflected, only becomes its true self via the other. What contribution do I make to this? This will raise problems of the kind we have already seen. Let us first, though, try to reconstruct some of Hegel's arguments.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*PG*) of 1807 is an account of the stages of this process of self-recognition in the other. It follows the developmental model of Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* (*STI*), but it wants to show how the process of reflection can be revealed as inherent

in the development of thought from the lowest to the highest stages. In the *PG* self-consciousness is revealed not to be the prior principle it is in, say, Fichte, but instead as that which can only come about via that which it is not: another consciousness. For Hegel, without the other consciousness I would remain in a state of unreflecting immediacy and never reach the stage of conscious reflection. By reflecting my consciousness in that of another I reveal the fact that consciousness can only develop via its relation to *Geist*, the overall structure of consciousness that it shares with others. Self-consciousness thus depends upon self-*objectification*, the negation of itself as individual inward 'Cartesian' awareness. Only by self-*division*, relating to the other's thinking (which is therefore not *my* thinking) can one achieve real awareness of what one's own consciousness is. Consciousness itself is precisely this process of division: it is what it is via what it is not.

This structure of determination by negation, a structure of reflection, is present in Hegel's philosophy at all levels. In its most developed form it purports to prove the identity of subject and object: if the subject can only be what it is via that which it is not, the two must ultimately be the same. In Hegel's terms:

> the subjective is that which transforms itself into the objective and the objective is that which does not remain as it is but which rather makes itself subjective. One would have to show via the finite itself that it contains the contradiction in itself and makes itself infinite.
>
> (*GP* III, p. 435)

The *Encyclopaedia* counters Kantian dualisms with the following argument, which relies upon the same principle:

> the designation of something as finite or limited contains the proof of the *real presence* of the infinite, of the unlimited . . . there can only be knowledge of the boundary in so far as the unbounded is *immanent* in consciousness.
>
> (*E*, p. 84)

Dieter Henrich suggests that 'Hegel took the decisive step towards the thought of the Absolute, which . . . is *Geist*, by reaching the thought of something finite that is an other in relation to itself.'[5] For Hegel the finite, empirical world, the world of transience and of common-sense experience, constantly negates itself, is a constant process of change. The phrase 'constant change' captures the essence of the argument. Gadamer puts it very aptly:

> what remains, what is real, is namely the fact that everything continu-

> ally disappears . . . constancy is, then, no longer the simple opposite of disappearing, but rather is itself the truth of disappearance.[6]

The facts of scientific theory, for example, come about in a process of negation. Hegel characterizes the Understanding, our faculty for law-bound cognition, as follows:

> If the determinations of thought are attached to a fixed opposition, i.e. if they are only of a *finite* kind, then they are inappropriate to the truth which is absolutely in and for itself . . . Thought which only produces *finite* determinations and moves within such is called *Understanding*.
>
> (*E*, p. 58)

The process of scientific knowledge is a continual refutation of what was previously held to be true. For Hegel, though, this does not entail scepticism. Without the previous 'truth', which has now been refuted, the present 'higher' truth could not come about. Galileo needed Ptolemaic physics to refute.

The Truth, then, is the process itself, the fact that everything finite is continually being transcended. It is the *limitations* of the Understanding that ground the Truth, which always goes beyond the particular theory that pertains at any one particular time. Henrich again: 'The Absolute is . . . the finite in so far as the finite is nothing but the continual process of self-negation (*Sich-selbst-Aufheben*).'[7] Where Kant opposes 'appearances' and 'things-in-themselves', Hegel wants to prove that appearance is in fact the essence of reality and, thus, that the idea of a 'thing-in-itself' apart from thought is *empty*:

> The thing *in itself* . . . expresses the object in so far as one *abstracts* from it everything that it is for consciousness, from all determination of feeling as well as all distinct thoughts of the object. It is easy to see what is left – the *total abstraction*, total *emptiness*.
>
> (*E*, p. 69)

Once one can grasp the transient nature of all reality, the transience ceases to be transient and becomes what remains. In the words of the preface to the *PG*: 'Appearance is the coming into being and passing away which itself does not come into being and pass away, but is rather in itself and constitutes the reality and movement of the life of truth' (*PG*, p. 416).

The example of the plant Hegel uses in the Preface illustrates the point. Each stage of the plant from seed to flower and back negates, destroys, the previous stage, but without the previous stage the

subsequent stage could not exist as itself. The sequence of appearances that make up the plant are equally a sequence of disappearances. Hegel's philosophy presents the essence of the plant (reality) as being a process where each stage destroys the previous stage but where the whole of this process is the truth. The same idea applies to philosophy: Kant needs previous metaphysics to refute and transcend, and Hegel needs Kant as the other of himself. There does seem, of course, to be no need for philosophers after Hegel.

The overall movement is only explicable via that which it is not, thus the 'Idea' of movement, the whole plant from its emergence to its decline, is not subject to the same movement as the series of appearances of the plant, but is yet inseparable from them. Hegel's thinking is, as Henrich puts it, 'a dynamized Platonism'.[6] It rejects the idea that there is truth in the transient, sensuous world which does not have to relate to its other, the eternal:

> If . . . the Idea should not have the value of truth because it is *transcendent* in relation to appearances, because no object in the sensuous world that corresponds to it can be given, this is a peculiar misunderstanding via which the Idea is not granted objective validity because it lacks that which constitutes appearance, the *untrue being* of the objective world.
>
> (*L* II, p. 463)

This leads to the necessary exclusion of intuition if the highest thought is to be articulated.

Art, therefore, can only show the 'sensuous appearing of the Idea', and not, as it did in the *ST1*, be the organ of philosophy. As such, the goal of philosophy is the explication of the Idea. The idea is the 'true being' of the appearances of reality. It is inseparable from the appearances in so far as they, by negating themselves as finite appearances, are necessary for the Idea. Hegel's *Logic* is thus able to claim that it can characterize all possible modes of thought independently of their particular content, as suggested in this passage from the *Logic*:

> The logic is accordingly to be grasped as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. *This realm is truth as it is without veil in and for itself.* One can therefore say that this content is the *representation [Darstellung] of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind.*
>
> (*L* I, p. 44).

The apparently bizarre status of the *Logic* as a description of thought which has no need to go through the historical stages of thought's devel-

opment in relation to nature, which thus precedes both nature and history, can only be understood by assuming the absolute status of the process described above. The *Encyclopaedia* sees the division of philosophy in the following order:

> I *Logic*, the science of the Idea in and for itself, II *Naturphilosophie* as the science of the Idea in its being other [i.e. nature is after the Idea], III *Philosophy of Geist* as the Idea which returns to itself from being other [i.e. the philosopher, as part of both nature and Mind, can return to something prior to nature and beyond nature in pure thought via the process of philosophical reflection].
>
> (*E*, p. 51)

The *Logic* relies on the following argument. So far in the history of thought every approach to truth has revealed itself to be relative and transitory; as such, the *Absolute* cannot be another version of the attempt to fix an absolute principle, but will instead make relativity, the movement of negation, the Absolute. Whilst the process of revealing this is temporal, what is arrived at is not: '*Geist* appears necessarily in time . . . it appears in time as long as it does not *grasp* its pure concept, i.e. does not abolish time' (*PG*, p. 584). Nothing transient or empirical can lead us to the Absolute:

> *Being* has achieved the significance of *truth* when the idea is the unity of the concept and reality; it *is* then only what the Idea is. Finite things are finite inasmuch as they do not completely have the reality of their concept in themselves, but need other finite things to have it.
>
> (*L* II, p. 465)

The proximity to Schelling's identity philosophy is clear in the dependence of the particular upon other particulars *ad infinitum* for its identity. Hegel's further claim is that this does not lead to an Absolute which is not articulable, because the Absolute is inherent in the movement of articulation itself. Without the transient, for Hegel, there could be no explication of the absolute status of constant change: the idea of change would be meaningless. The Absolute for Hegel has to be arrived at via determination by negation, the process of thought in history whose truth emerges as constant change.

Music and the Idea

Hegel's *Logic* is by definition 'abstract'. Characteristically, for Hegel, this makes it concrete, in that, without abstraction, the truth of the concrete cannot be revealed. The apparently most concrete, the sensuous immediacy of what is in front of you as you read this sentence, is 'abstract', in

that it omits all the complex mediations required for you to be reading it at all. The thought with which the *Logic* is concerned is that which enables us to reach the truth of the sensuous world:

> The *elevation* of thought above the sensuous, the *transcendence* of thought over the finite to the infinite, the *leap* which is made with the breaking off of the sequences of the sensuous into the super-sensuous, all this is thinking itself, this transcending is *only thinking*. Animals really do not make such a transition; *they* remain with sensuousness and intuition; this is why they have no religion.
>
> (*E*, p. 75)

The very process of trying to understand the *Logic* already suggests an important problem. The attempt to think in pure thought must be intransitive: the thinking must be thinking of itself, as otherwise the infinite becomes dependent upon the finite object. One cannot reverse the priority, in order to derive the infinite from the finite. The problem is how the infinite is to be represented. The problem with representing the infinite in thought is that representation inherently limits what is to be represented.

Kant's notion of the sublime was one way of suggesting how one might represent the infinite capacity of thought. In the sublime the subject negates anything sensuous; the impetus to do so is, though, given by the feeling evoked by the sensuous: it is the failure of the sensuous to represent the infinite which constitutes our access to the infinite. Hegel's way of transcending the sensuous is more ambitious, but also highly questionable. The problem with the *Logic* will be how the move is made from pure thought to nature, including ourselves as thinking individuals. Schelling points to Hegel's problem in the Munich lectures. The decision to think about thinking cannot be

> real [*wirklich*] thinking. Real thinking is that through which something opposed to thought is overcome . . . Hegel himself describes this movement by simple abstractions, like Being, Becoming etc., as a movement in pure, i.e. unresisting ether.
>
> (I/10, p. 141/557)

Schelling uses the example of poetry as an analogy to the problem facing a philosophy of pure thought. In what way are the moves in thought of the *Logic* real? Poetry can represent a 'poetic soul in relation to and in conflict with reality . . . But poetry can also have poetry in general and *in abstracto* as its object – it can be poetry about poetry' (ibid.). He cites Romantic 'poetry about poetry', claiming that 'no one has held this poetry to be real poetry' (ibid.). The idea of such poetry is, as we shall see

again later, associated with music. Is there really a difference between the *Logic*'s status as thought about thought, and poetry about poetry? Significantly, one of the ways in which Hegel attempts to explicate the movement of thought in the *Logic* is by the example of music, the form of art which does not depend upon representation.

Hegel links musical harmony to his notion of the 'concept'. For Hegel the 'concept' is that which includes the whole process of that 'of' which it is the concept: the process and the concept are not different. The concept 'tree' is not the empirical object I have in front of me, nor is it my thinking of a tree when I cannot see one. Instead, the concept includes all the stages of the tree that have preceded what I now might see (as well as what will succeed these stages), *and* their reflection in my and others' thinking. Without the process of thought the process of the object could never be revealed, indeed the object itself would never be a particular object. Seeing a tree 'as' a tree involves a consciousness that sets itself against its object. At the same time the thought without the object would have nothing to think about: what would it be thought of? The concept obviously cannot be thought by an individual subject all at once, but for Hegel it is required if the concept is to be 'of' the object: hence his rejection of the immediate as a locus of truth, and his requirement that thinking be speculative. Whether this could apply to thinking of oneself remains, of course, a problem. How, though, does Hegel link his view of the concept to music?

Hegel's argument refers to diatonic music: music in a specific key, which, though it may leave this key, will return to it. In the section of the *Logic* on 'elective affinities' (where he links music and chemistry) music is an analogy for the whole method:

> the single note [like the empirical phenomenon] has its sense only in the . . . connection with another note and with the sequence of other notes. . . . The single note is the tonic of a system, but just as much again a member in the system of every other tonic.
>
> (*L* I, p. 421)

The note 'C' only becomes C by its negative relation to other notes in the key system: it is not B or D. C can be the tonic, but it can as easily be the dominant of F or the subdominant of G. Hegel sees an analogy of this to the way in which elements such as carbon or hydrogen are combined in compounds. It is also analogous to the way a differential view of language thinks of the signifier. In this interpretation music is a reflexive structure: each aspect becomes what it is by being the other of itself.

In the *Aesthetics* Hegel links the 'concept' to the major triad, the basic

unit of consonance in diatonic music (for example the chord CEG). The triad expresses the

> concept of harmony in its simplest form, indeed [it expresses] the very nature of the concept. For we have a totality of different notes before us which shows this difference just as much as undisturbed unity.
> (*Ä* II, p. 296)

The unity of the differing notes is higher than the single note's existence by itself. Just repeating C would be like saying 'Hari Krishna'; adding E and G combines difference and identity to make something deeper. The significance of diatonic music is, though, not only a result of consonance, in the same way as advance in the sciences is not based on agreement. Hegel sees musical dissonance of the kind introduced by the dominant seventh (B flat in the key of C) as creating tension that must be resolved, and he links this to the argument of the *Logic.*

It is worth quoting the passage at length. Dissonance

> constitutes the real depth of notes [*Tönen*] in that it also progresses to essential oppositions and is not afraid of their severity and disunity. For the true concept is admittedly unity in itself, but this subjectivity negates [Hegel uses the verb *aufheben* with its triple meaning of negation, preservation and raising up] itself as ideal transparent unity into its opposite, into objectivity, indeed it is as the simply ideal itself only a one-sidedness and particularity . . . and only truly subjectivity when it goes into this opposition and overcomes and dissolves it.
> (*Ä* II, p. 297)

The next stage, then, has to be the resolution of dissonance: 'Only this movement, as the return of identity to itself, is the Truth' (loc. cit.). There is no difference here between music and the overall movement of the *Logic.* A sonata movement that begins in a particular key (the example of Beethoven fits ideally here, though Hegel does not refer to it) moves away from this key and thereby creates tension and dissonance. When the sonata returns to its initial tonality after moving into other keys the initial tonality has been deepened in a way that repeating one note or the major triad could never achieve.

The *Logic* expresses the same idea for philosophy: ultimately thought and its object are in harmony, but this can only be revealed by the process of their opposition and reconciliation. In the same way as all the notes of the chromatic scale are likely to appear in a classical symphony at some point, and at the end become part of the path to the re-establishing of the tonic key, the divisions involved in conceptual thinking are integrated into the teleology of the Idea, a sort of ultimate harmonic

resolution. The power of this conception can be experienced in a symphony like Bruckner's Eighth, where the sheer length and complexity of the path to the final resolution make that resolution into the major tonic key so overwhelming. In such a conclusion all the preceding tension becomes retrospectively orientated to its goal, the resolution into the tonic key. The beginning and the end require each other, as they do in the *Logic.*

The 'symphony' of the *Logic* culminates like this:

> The *identity* of the Idea with itself is one with the *process* [of differentiation]; the thought which frees reality [*Wirklichkeit* in the sense of what is at hand] from the appearance of purposeless changeability and transfigures it into the Idea must not imagine this truth of reality as dead tranquillity, as just an *image*, dull without drive or movement . . . the Idea, for the sake of freedom which the concept achieves in it, also contains the *hardest contradiction* in itself; its tranquillity consists in the sureness and certainty with which it eternally creates contradiction and eternally overcomes it.
>
> (*L* II, pp. 467–8)

A theme emerges, disappears, reappears in changed form, and is finally made part of a wider movement, which ends in a way that the varying themes, which contrasted and replaced each other, are seen as inherently belonging together. A symphony does this, though, for a listener who hears the elements and feels their effect as a coherent unity. Who the 'listener' is in the *Logic* is unclear. Schelling says that the Idea at the end of the *Logic* is: 'subject and object, conscious of itself, as the ideal and the real, which thus has no need any more to become real any more and in any other way than it already is' (I/10, p. 152/569), reinforcing the sense that the *Logic* is self-contained like a symphony, which needs to represent no more than itself.

The Idea seems to move in the manner of an organically integrated piece of music. Schelling, though, questions why, in that case, the Idea needs to prove itself by, as Hegel puts it, 'releasing itself as nature' from itself:

> But for whom should the Idea prove itself? For itself? But it is that which is certain of itself . . . and knows in advance that it will not be destroyed in being other; for the Idea this struggle would be completely pointless. Should it, then, prove itself for a Third, for a spectator? But where is the spectator?
>
> (I/10, p. 153/569)

The essential problem is that, in its desire to avoid a presupposition, the

Logic thinks it can even make its own foundation, Being, into part of itself. It does so by the argument that Being is as nothing until it has become part of the process of mediation. Schelling again makes the problem clear:

> in Hegel's philosophy the beginning relates to what follows as a simple nothing, as a lack, an emptiness, which is filled and is admittedly felt as emptiness, but there is in this as little to overcome as there is in filling an empty vessel; it all happens quite peacefully – there is no opposition between Being and Nothing; they don't do anything to each other.
>
> (I/10, p. 137/553)

The tensions and contradictions of reality which philosophy tries to comprehend seem in Hegel already to have within them their resolution because they are in thought, and, as such, follow the necessities of the infinite movement of thought. Again, the parallel to music helps to grasp the issue: the dissonance in a symphony already has the telos of its resolution within it, as does the division of Being and Nothing. Hegel's recourse to music as part of the attempt to represent the movement of the *Logic* can be seen as pointing to the crucial weakness of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel takes a medium, music, which allows reconciliation in the realm of appearance, of art, in order to explicate a supposed reconciliation in Being itself. The medium of music does not say, however, what this resolution is: it is not a positive representation of a resolution in reality. This fact will be a major root of music's significance for aesthetics from this period onwards.[9] Hegel's conception of art does not allow him to understand why this might be.

Hegel sees music, like other art forms, as only part of the prelude to the fully transparent and articulated concept of philosophy. Because music is 'completely abstract' (*Ä* II, p. 261), it is only a stage in the realization of the Absolute and is a lower form of art than representational forms like drama. Implicit in this is the conviction that Being can become transparent to itself via its conceptual articulation, as suggested in the *Logic*. Seen this way philosophy would be able to give the truest account of what music is. Each step of musical change has entailed a reformulation of the canon of the acceptable. Hegel has no problem accounting for the dynamics of such a process. The revisions of the theory of harmony, for instance, would in Hegel's terms be inherent in the 'concept' of harmony that is revealed at the end as the Idea of harmony. Seen in this way, each radical turn away from the canon is presupposed in the Idea that emerges at the end of the process, which philosophy articulates.

The problem is, crudely, that this puts theory before practice, or, if you like, thought before existence, in order to grasp the whole of the

phenomenon in question conceptually. It does not account for that which brings about the innovation, which is just subsumed into its articulation in theory. Nor does it account for the importance of a medium which does not *per se* represent conceptual ideas, but which is not devoid of meaning. Hegel sees music as limited to 'subjective inwardness': as I shall show in Chapter 7, this fails to exhaust the significance of music as a way of grasping modern self-consciousness. The failure in relation to music parallels Hegel's more general problems with theorizing self-consciousness, and thus with his aesthetic theory.

Language, consciousness and Being

Aesthetic innovation in modernity is inseparable from individual self-consciousness. The question of language and the question of subjectivity are inseparable. Hegel himself sees language as the 'existence (*Dasein*) of *Geist*' in the *Phenomenology* (*P*, p. 478). In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel says of language:

> Because *language* is the product [*Werk*] of thought nothing can be said in it which is not general. What I only *mean* is *mine*, belongs to me as this particular individual; but if language only expresses the general I cannot say what I *mean*. And the *Unsayable*, emotion, feeling [i.e. that which is particular to me qua individual] is not the most excellent, the most true but rather the most insignificant, most untrue . . . if I say 'I' I mean myself as this person that excludes all others; but what I say, i.e. I, is what everyone is; I that excludes all others.
>
> (*E*, p. 56)

In one sense this is like a Wittgensteinian argument that there cannot be a private language. The structure of the identity of opposites appears again: the 'sign', 'signifier' 'I' can only gain its significance via its general application, but it is thereby able to designate my particular I. The problems of reflection theory recur as well, though: Hegel's disqualification of 'feeling', the 'Unsayable', is dependent upon the assumption that what consciousness *is* is explicable via the general structure of its reflection in the other. Thought is only really thought via its reflection and explication in the general medium of language.

Hegel, though, actually presupposes an identity which can only be postulated, not demonstrated. The generality of the sign, our using the same word to designate anything, particularly ourselves, is no ontological guarantee that this identity can be known. As Sartre puts it: 'my relationship to the other is initially and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of cognition to cognition'[10] (*EN*, p. 289). My reflection in the signifier 'I' would only lead to infinite regression – I see myself in the word I, but, as we saw in relation to Novalis, the I doing the seeing

needs some way of already knowing itself, and the signifier is only a schematic way of identifying to the other that which resists representation.

The significance of the idea of 'intellectual intuition' lay in its questioning of the reflection model by asking whether consciousness is explicable via its reflection in another, whether this is itself, another consciousness, or language. 'Intellectual intuition' was a notion of consciousness that could not be reduced to an I reflecting itself in a not-I, in order to be what it is. In 'intellectual intuition' the thinking and the thought are *immediately* the same. The real problem with intellectual intuition is that the concept still involves a duality, in which the intellect immediately intuits an other as itself. This is not the intention of the term. The intention is to escape a model in which subjectivity is regarded as an object, and thus as reducible to its concept. Manfred Frank argues:

> If self-consciousness cannot be characterized by the as-structure, then it may no longer be described as conceptual knowledge (every concept relates indirectly – by virtue of an attribute which is common to many objects – to a content of thinking).[11]

Intellectual intuition, or what term for self-consciousness it is replaced by in order to avoid the duality, is supposed to be the condition of reflection, and is therefore prior to it. Hegel would see this as saying 'Hari Krishna': the truth of consciousness for Hegel is its articulation in the concept, not the moment of immediacy.

The most accessible account of the main problem in Hegel is Sartre's, although Sartre's argument has more antecedents than he was aware of. Sartre questions the cognitive model of consciousness: 'we have to abandon the primacy of cognition if we wish to found this cognition itself'; consciousness 'is, in itself, something other than a cognition turned back on itself' (*EN*, p. 17), or reflected in another consciousness. Reflection gives rise to the regress seen in the preceding chapters: how does consciousness know it is seeing itself? Consciousness must in some way be 'pre-reflexive', there before it reflects itself.

Sartre explains this by the example of pleasure. My consciousness of pleasure, aesthetic pleasure in relation to a symphony, for example, cannot be separated from the pleasure itself. 'Pleasure cannot exist before consciousness of pleasure', *nor* should pleasure 'disappear behind the consciousness it has (of) itself'. Sartre brackets 'of' because it suggests a division which he wishes to question; he also brackets 'of' in consciousness (of) oneself: the self and consciousness cannot be separated in the manner of thinking about an object. Pleasure 'is not a representation; it is a concrete, full and absolute event. . . . The pleasure is the being of the consciousness (of) itself and the consciousness (of) itself is the law of being of pleasure' (*EN*, p. 21). The development of the *concept* of

pleasure which, as Hegel suggests, comes about by opposing it to its other has as its precondition the *existence* of pleasure, which is not *reducible* to its subsequent conceptualization, be it in Hegelian, Freudian, or any other terms. The same applies to consciousness: 'the very *being* of consciousness, being independent of cognition, pre-exists its *truth* . . . consciousness *was there* before being known' (*EN*, p. 284).

In Hegel's argument the truth of consciousness emerges via its reflection in a universal structure which it shares with others and constitutes at the same time. My or your consciousness is formed in social interaction, in a totality within which it is ultimately subsumed. Because I need your consciousness to realize my own, the truth of consciousness is part of the universal structure which negates individual subjectivity, though it realizes itself through it. Consciousness is thus implicitly already part of a whole which our common capacity for thought can reveal. Schelling's critique of Hegel in the Munich lectures reveals the problem in this in a way which demonstrably influenced Feuerbach, and thus also Marx's later critique of Hegel.

We have already seen Schelling's objection to Hegel's equation of Being and Nothing, in which '*Pure Being and Pure Nothing are . . . the same*' (*L* I p. 83). Schelling and Feuerbach have no objections to the abstract moves in thought made in the *Logic*: they recognize what a remarkable methodological achievement the *Logic* is. They want to insist, though, that the moves are *in thought*. Hegel, Schelling claims, tries to dissolve Being into its concept, however:

> Concepts as such in fact exist nowhere but in consciousness; they *are*, therefore, taken objectively, *after* nature, not *before* it; Hegel took them from their natural position by putting them at the beginning of philosophy. There he places the most abstract concepts first, becoming, existence etc.; but abstractions cannot of course be there, be taken for realities, before that from which they are abstracted; becoming cannot be there before something becomes, existence not before something exists.
>
> (I/10, p. 141/557)

This parallels Novalis' insistence on the need to correct the inversion which is the result of reflection being put first in philosophy. Feuerbach's and Marx's remarks on the need to stand Hegel on his feet derive from this. Feuerbach says of the beginning of the *Logic* in his critique of Hegel: 'Being in abstracto, Being *without* objectivity, *without* reality, *without* Being for itself is admittedly Nothing, but in *this Nothing I only express the nullity of my own abstraction.*'[12]

In the *Philosophy of Revelation* (*PO*, p. 126)[13] of 1841–2 Schelling sees Hegel as providing the 'negative philosophy', which contains all the *a*

priori possible moves of thinking. Why these moves should have any reality cannot be explained by such a philosophy. The 'positive philosophy' begins with 'unprethinkable Being' (*das unvordenkliche Sein*) (*PO*, p. 161), which is the 'Not-Not to be thought' (*PO*, p. 126), the ground of conceptual thinking which necessarily precedes it: 'What is the beginning of all thought is not yet thinking' (*PO*, p. 161). To the objection that we could have no way of thinking this, Schelling replies that unprethinkable Being has been overcome by the free action of consciousness: thinking it therefore involves the renunciation of conceptual thinking: '*The blindly existing is that* which suppresses everything which derives from the concept, *before which thinking goes silent*' (*PO*, p. 157). If 'necessary existence could be deduced from a concept which precedes it, then necessary existence would itself be renounced thereby' (*PO*, p. 158), because the concept's existence would be the necessary existence, and one could remain, as Hegel does, in the realm of thought. This would again fail to explain why the Idea should become involved in nature. Schelling rejects Hegel's ontological proof that, because we have the concept of Being, the fact of Being must be articulable in the concept.

For Schelling the fact that this Being ceases to be simply opaque to itself can only be understood after the contingent fact of its ceasing to be opaque, which has always already happened when we reflect on it. It cannot be deduced from a necessary preceding Idea. If thinking is inseparable from freedom, it cannot come about necessarily as part of an overall process of Reason. The *PO*, which, despite its ultimately Christian argument, prefigures existential philosophy, refuses to accept an immanence of Reason, seeing the primary Being as contingent (*PO*, p. 169). As such, thought can never catch up with its own origin: the logos is always subsequent to its basis. Freedom becomes a matter of open choice, not the development of something already inherent in Being that is revealed in the concept. In a formulation which is echoed by the late Foucault's contention that 'The transformation of one's self by one's knowledge is . . . something rather close to the aesthetic experience',[14] Schelling maintains that '*Freeing oneself from oneself* is the task of all *Bildung*' (*PO*, p. 170). The task is not becoming what one already inherently is. One means of achieving this is aesthetic productivity, which retains a contingent individuality which can never be fully theorized if it is to sustain itself as free productivity.

Hegel assumes the primacy of the conceptualization of an object of thought: the truth of the object emerges in the process of its interaction with the subject (and *vice versa*). Once this truth is revealed, it gives us the essence of the object. As was already suggested the problem in Hegel's aesthetic theory is the assumption that the truth of a work of art emerges completely via its conceptual articulation. The assumption is that the truth is always already there when I interpret a literary text, for

example. All I have to do is to reveal the mediations that are present in the text. This means that my role as interpreter is just to read what is supposedly latent in the text, not to reveal things about the text via my individual creative initiative. Hartmut Scheible sees Hegel's achievement as making possible the conceptual analysis of the historical development of art as part of the overall development of thinking. The price for this historicization of the truth of art is that 'with the turn towards an aesthetics of conceptually fixed content the individual subject ceases to play a role in the constitution of aesthetic truth'.[15] Art becomes comprehensible to an unprecedented extent, and becomes subsumable within the wider truth of philosophy, thereby ceasing to be a significant means for the articulation of truth. The result is, though, both a reduction of the semantic potential of art and the repression of the subject's individuality. In the next chapter I shall show how Schleiermacher offers ways of resisting this repression.

The reasons for questioning Hegel's position can be shown by the following example. In *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* Oliver Sacks describes the case of a patient he calls the 'autistic artist'. Sacks' patient moves from almost total non-communication to being able to articulate himself in drawings of natural objects which have a peculiar intensity. He does not learn to communicate linguistically. Sacks says of the autistic:

> Lacking, or indisposed to, the general [they] seem to compose their world entirely of particulars. Thus they live, not in a universe, but in what William James called a 'multiverse', of innnumerable, exact and passionately intense particulars. It is a mode of mind at the opposite extreme from the generalising, the scientific, but still 'real', equally real, in a quite different way.[16]

In Hegelian terms the truth of an autistic world is simply that of particularity which has not been transcended in order to reach its concept: it is caught in the particular via its lack of a means of general articulation. Sacks' point is that there are lessons to be learned from his patient. The 'autistic artist' escapes dominant attitudes to the natural world which are increasingly the norm in the Western world; he does not, so to speak, 'subjectify Being'. He has an intensity of relation to the particular plant, animal or whatever which 'normal' people lack, and becomes able to communicate this in images.

I do not wish to argue that mental pathologies are able to lead to profane revelation. However, if one accepts the fact that such pathologies are not just the unsolved problems of medical and social engineering, one must take seriously the reality that Sacks refers to, the reality of a self-consciousness which can never be wholly transcended into a universal

structure. To take an example near to Hegel: artistic creation and mental pathology are often closely linked in the nineteenth century. Hölderlin – once Hegel's friend, and, as we saw, a philosopher of some considerable talent – eventually became mentally ill. Before reaching the stage of being unable to carry on writing poetry he produced poems which use language in a manner that still challenges us now.

Hölderlin's experience is characteristic of the most significant modern artists: they exhibit an almost unbearable tension between individual consciousness and the collectively acknowledged systems of signs in which that consciousness tries to articulate itself. Hegel's view of language, and of aesthetics, necessarily subordinates this tension to the truth of language as the general means of articulation.

Paradoxically, as anyone who has read much Hegel will be more than aware, Hegel's own relationship to language is hardly an illustration of his theoretical point: not the least fascination of Hegel's philosophy is the struggle for articulation carried on within the text. Furthermore, the fact that there is still no agreement about what Hegel really meant – I am sure some Hegelians will already be up in arms about my interpretation – suggests the complexity of the matter.

It is no coincidence that at this time other thinkers in Germany are increasingly concerned, as we saw Novalis was, with the 'Unsayable'. This has for too long been understood as though it were solely a mystical Romantic quirk. What seems so important about this other view is that it refuses to subsume the 'Unsayable' into a form of general articulation. The subject is not just regarded in terms of its transparence to the general linguistic community, or, to cite the contemporary version of the same problem, in terms of its being an 'effect' of the textual mirror in which it reflects itself. Consciousness, as we have already seen in Schelling and the Romantics, is seen as having a ground which can never be fully transparent to itself. Thinking about these issues is linked to reflection on language, aesthetic theory, and music. Hegel's attempt to resolve the inherent contradictions in the principle of subjectivity (its 'one-sidedness', as Habermas put it), and his announcing the end of art, coincide with the emergence of radical reflection upon language and a flowering of musical creativity that need further investigation. Whilst Hegel inaugurates vital dimensions of historical reflection upon aesthetics, he at the same time fails to understand how many of the issues he raises will undermine the rest of his philosophical project. Let us now turn to the *Aesthetics*.

The Idea as sensuous appearance

Hegel defines beauty as the 'sensuous *appearing* of the Idea' (*Ä* I, p. 117). In the light of the arguments seen so far, qualifying beauty as the 'sensuous' appearing of the Idea puts beauty into a subordinate position.

Beauty's reliance on the sensuous means that it is contaminated with the transient. As we saw, the Absolute was the non-transient revelation of transience: knowing that everything specific ceases to be is a higher truth than determining what something specific is. One side of the argument on beauty is easy to understand if one thinks of Shakespeare's contemplation of the transience of (female) beauty in the sonnets. However much such beauty seems to point beyond its finite status, it is yet bound to fade and cease to be. For Hegel even art works, which are not subject to the same natural iron law of disappearance, are not able to sever all connection with the transient. Only the Idea, speculative philosophy in Hegel's sense, can do this.

Hegel is insistent that beauty in works of art has a higher status than natural beauty, thereby reversing Kant's priorities. Beauty depends upon the development of thought, not upon an immediate pleasurable contemplation of the natural world: 'natural beauty appears only as a reflex of beauty which belongs to *Geist*' (*Ä* I, p. 14). 'Only' in this statement suggests the problem. Hegel's argument about the beauty of nature and the beauty of art suggests that if nature is mainly seen as a threat that must be overcome by *Geist* in the interests of self-preservation, it cannot appear beautiful. Beauty is linked to subjective control over nature, which allows thought to move beyond an immediate empirical relationship to nature. When the mountain is no longer just a danger it can become an object of contemplation that makes it more than brute resistant matter.

In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno approvingly cites Verlaine's line 'la mer est plus belle que les cathédrales'[17] to suggest the complex dialectic involved in this issue in modernity, of which Hegel tends only to see one side. In order to be aware of the superior beauty of the sea one might first need cathedrals, but for Gothic cathedrals, for instance, one also needed the forms of trees. Adorno stresses the fact that natural beauty is a result of a non-instrumental relationship to nature, a result of contemplating nature as appearance: 'Like the experience of art, aesthetic experience of nature is an experience of images',[18] not of something concrete that is to be worked upon. This only becomes possible at a certain stage of the development of the capacity to control nature, in the eighteenth century, and is clearly also linked to the demise of the dogmatic theological view of the world, where beauty was a celebration of God's creation.

As we saw, Hegel does not equate appearance with illusion or deception: though it passes away it is also the 'reality and movement of the life of truth'. Thus, in the *Aesthetics*, Hegel states: 'Far from being simple appearance the appearances of art should be seen as possessing the higher reality and the truer existence in relation to normal reality' (*Ä* I, p. 20). Unlike immediate empirical reality, which appears to commonsense to be the most obvious truth, but is actually only transient, artistic appearance 'points through itself to something spiritual [*Geistiges*]' (ibid.). A

picture of a mountain involves a process of mediation which someone just contemplating the mountain would not go through: think of looking at a Caspar David Friedrich painting. However, even this dependence on the empirical means for Hegel that art is a lower manifestation of the Idea. It is the *sensuous* appearance of the Idea, which therefore must have non-sensuous ways of appearing. Any dependence upon particular intuitions (*Anschauung*) means for Hegel that the object has not come to itself via its 'concept', which has, as we saw, to include all the stages of the object, not just one particular aspect of the object at a particular moment in time.

In addition, Hegel makes the notorious point that art, because it is 'limited to a distinct content', no longer 'fulfils our highest need'. 'Thought and reflection have overtaken [*überflügelt* in the sense of 'flown over'] art' (*Ä* I, p. 21). The arguments of the *Logic* about the need to transcend the particular and the transient are thus linked to a historical assessment of art's relationship to philosophy. This failure of art to fulfil our highest need means that the higher truth belongs to other modes of reflection, culminating in Hegel's system. He is blunt about the matter:

> The constitution of reflection of our contemporary life makes it necessary, both in relation to the will and in relation to judgment, to establish general view-points and accordingly to regulate the particular, so that general forms, laws, duties, rights, maxims are valid as the bases of determination and are the principal rulers. . . . The *science* of art is thus in our time much more necessary than in times in which art for itself as art provided complete satisfaction.
>
> (*Ä* I. p. 21)

Aesthetic theory, therefore, emerges for Hegel at the time when aesthetic praxis is no longer vital to the articulation of truth.

This argument must itself be understood historically before one questions it. There is no doubt that the establishment of the modern cultural spheres of natural science and law depends on overcoming the particular and on setting up universal ways of thinking that can be applied to the particular case. The fight against feudalism and the arbitrary authority of the Church in the name of universal rights and scientific objectivity are inescapable necessities in modernity. Hegel's argument is worrying to the extent that *everything* is only of significance to the extent that it points beyond itself to a wider structure that is its truth. This was already the reason for the turn towards a philosophy of sensuous particularity for Baumgarten. If one shows that Hegel's argument is inadequate to the case of art, the consequences will affect all levels of his project. The question is one of meaning: Hegel only allows ultimate significance to socially and conceptually agreed general truths.

One does not have to concur with Schelling in the *STI* and suggest that art really is the expression of the Absolute. It is possible to show that Hegel's philosophy most clearly shows its weakness in relation to aesthetics without making any such claim. Let us take a central example from the *Aesthetics*, which is already familiar from the *PA*. Hegel frequently supports his arguments about the subordinate role of the aesthetic with the example of the superiority of Christianity over pagan, particularly Greek, religion. Hegel is monotheistic. Greek art, which represents the Gods in human form, has as its content 'the unity of human and divine nature, a unity which precisely because it is *immediate* and *in itself* can be adequately manifested in an immediate and *sensuous* manner' (*Ä* I, p. 86). The *knowledge* of the unity of human and divine, which requires reflection, cannot for Hegel be present in a concrete object like a sculpture. We have already seen a version of the argument in Schelling. Classical art (by which Hegel usually means Greek sculpture) expresses a stage of the development of *Geist* where the sensuous and *Geist* are unified: the material is removed from its just being a block of marble and is formed by *Geist* into a sensuous representation of itself. The advance in Christianity is that God

> should be known as *Geist* and in *Geist*. His element of existence is thereby essentially inner knowledge and not the external natural form via which he will only be representable immediately and not according to the whole depth of his concept.
>
> (*Ä* I, p. 79)

This argument should also be familiar.

It is close to Kant's fascination with the ban on images in Jewish theology, in his account of the sublime's pointing to the limits of sensuous representation of the supersensuous. Kant does not articulate the highest principle of his philosophy. Hegel thinks his own philosophy has been able to articulate what Kant could not, and therefore does not need sensuous representation. He therefore renounces the idea of the 'new mythology' which would make ideas aesthetic. He also does not see art as articulating a lack that cannot be overcome, as the Romantics did. Interestingly, Freud was later to see this question in a similar way to Hegel. This convergence can be seen as demonstrating their mutual adherence to Heidegger's and Derrida's 'Western metaphysics', where thought reaches its highest principle by the elimination of sensuousness. It should already be clear, though, as was already apparent in Hamann and was evident in Schelling, that within the tradition there is a countermovement, which does not rely on the elimination of the sensuous.

The origin of what Freud calls the 'Moses religion' is linked to the ban

on images, whereby one is compelled to honour a God one cannot see. For Freud this meant a

> subordination of sensuous perception to an idea that is to be called abstract, a triumph of spirituality [*Geistigkeit*] over sensuality, strictly speaking a renunciation of a drive with its psychologically necessary consequences.[19]

The renunciation of a drive is, though, likely to give rise to neurosis, one of the primary forms of the return of the repressed. The philosophical history of subjectivity entails a history of repression, as we already saw in the way Schelling described the development of the 'I' in the *STI*. The question is what kind of repression this is.

This question is more complex than it looks in Freud. The constitution of the truth of subjectivity as *Geist* represses in more than one way. As has been recently pointed out by Genevieve Lloyd,[20] this triumph of spirituality is attached by Freud to a story which has patriarchal implications. The suppression of the sensuous results from the privileging of the father, whose invisible role in the production of children is given primacy over the visible role of the mother. To do this involves an abstract deduction that an act committed nine months before the appearance of the child is the vital act, hence Freud's interpretation. The same kind of story is told at the end of *Oresteia*. The achievements of *Geist* are at the expense of the female.

The repressions in the constitution of reason are underestimated by Hegel, which is one reason why he deals with the aesthetic in the way he does. Whilst Hegel is aware of the pain and contradiction involved in the advance of reason, it does not lead him to question the immanently teleological notion of reason which is implied in the development of *Geist*, which Schelling and others come to question. Freud is aware, particularly in *Civilization and its Discontents*, that reason is bought at a high price, even if he does not realize its links to the repressive history of patriarchy. Schelling and Freud are insistent upon the roots of our reflection in nature, whereas for Hegel, as Scheible puts it, 'the process of mediation of mind and nature . . . results in the carrying out of the claim to domination of mind over everything which is external to it'.[21] This domination requires the systematic elimination of the sensuous image, and the idea that all aesthetic awareness is ultimately just a prelude to something higher. There is not space to do justice to it here, but it is clear that a feminist account of aesthetics could provide important new insights into this question.

Hegel's account of the development of art relies on the progressive diminution of the significance of the sensuous. He sees three stages of the development of art: the Symbolic, the Classical and the Romantic.

In 'Symbolic' art the meaning of the work and the form used to express it are not essentially related. Hegel sees mythological stories about abstract themes like life and death as symbolic. *Geist* seeks to express abstract ideas via what can be observed in nature: the observation of how plants die and grow again the next year is used as a story to explain death and the continuation of life in general. In Hegel's terms this way of thinking always involves the disadvantage of beginning with the specific and the concrete – for example a particular story like the myth of Persephone – which is not adequate to express the general truth of *Geist*. The Sphinx is for Hegel the 'Symbol of the Symbolic itself' (*Ä* I, p. 352): human *Geist* attempts to emerge from the animal realm but does not fully succeed; the animal body remains.

The animal body is linked to a female torso: Hegel's interpretation of this, like Freud's story of monotheism, omits a whole dimension of the history of patriarchy, in which the lower forms of mind are associated with the female, something which recurs in his view of Antigone. His very method of classifying the forms of art in a developmental history fails to take account of the way in which the *interpretation* of symbols is a process which can never be fully controlled. Symbols for Hegel retain something which is not clearly *articulated* (a word that constantly recurs in the *Aesthetics*), and must, as such, be transcended. As we will see in the next chapter, at the same time as Hegel is arguing this view of symbol, Schleiermacher is developing a view of hermeneutics which will undermine it by pointing to the ways in which interpretation can never be complete. For Schleiermacher the ability to transcend the particular into the general is never total because of the nature of language.

Hegel's next stage of art, the 'Classical', unites 'meaning and corporeality' (*Ä* I, p. 418): 'only the externality of man is capable of revealing the spiritual in a sensuous manner' (*Ä* I, p. 419). Hence Greek sculpture based on the human form is an expression of the Ideal, a point largely borrowed from Schelling's *Philosophy of Art* (*PA*). The next stage, the 'Romantic', makes it clear just how much Hegel is indebted to Lutheran theology. The Romantic stage is founded in the idea of incarnation: God becomes flesh and thereby undergoes the pain of self-division. There is an echo here of the statement at the end of the *Logic*, that the already constituted Idea '*freely releases*' itself into nature (*L* II, p. 573). In Christianity – which is what Hegel means by 'Romantic art' – this is expressed in the story of Christ's crucifixion, which is followed by God's return to himself in the resurrection and the ascension. Romantic art expresses this in a concrete story, thus still remaining at the level of the image.

The story, though, is dynamic in a way that Greek sculpture's 'noble simplicity and quiet greatness' (Winckelmann) in the face of pain and death is not. For Hegel Romantic art 'sublates', in the threefold sense of negation, preservation and elevation, the divisions that Greek art only

contemplates. This parallels the move from sense-certainty (contemplation) to self-consciousness (an active relation to self and other) in the *Phenomenology*. It can be argued that Hegel's philosophy is Protestant theology which has been raised above its residual attachment to the particular story, such as the incarnation and the crucifixion, in order to reveal the universality it contains. The example of death in the *Aesthetics* tells us much about Hegel's philosophy.

In Romantic art death

> is only a dying off of the natural soul and of finite subjectivity, a dying off which only relates negatively to that which is itself negative, which sublates that which is vain [*das Nichtige*, i.e. the transient] and thereby mediates the liberation of *Geist* from its finitude and division, as well as mediating the reconciliation of the subject with the Absolute.
>
> (*Ä* I, p. 504)

Whereas Greek art's external existence as an object reflected a view of life as the external existence of the body, and death was, correspondingly, simple negativity:

> In the Romantic world view death means negativity, i.e. the negation of the negative, and therefore turns just as much into the affirmative, as the resurrection of *Geist* out of its simple naturalness and inappropriate finitude.
>
> (ibid.)

In the same way as Hegel's philosophy is constant change, so this kind of theology suggests that death is the life of *Geist*. The philosophy and the theology are not far apart.

It is not that interesting to show how far Hegel's philosophy still relies upon Protestant theology. It is more interesting to see how such thinking is in complicity with some of the problematic aspects of modernity that we have suggested earlier. This complicity becomes apparent when Hegel explains why art must become subordinate to philosophy. One side of this should already be clear: the arguments of the *Aesthetics* involve the same attitude towards sensuous existence as did those of the *Logic*: it is only the overcoming of the sensuous that is its truth.

Hegel relates this argument to the historical issue of aesthetic theory, when discussing the end of art. For Hegel, Classical art's combination of the spiritual and the natural is the 'completion of the realm of beauty. There cannot be anything, and nothing can become, more beautiful' (*Ä* I, p. 498). As such, in Romantic art 'beauty in its most appropriate form and its most apt content is no longer the ultimate aim' (*Ä* I, p. 499). Instead of trying to reflect the truth externally Romantic art realizes

that the truth of thought is independent of contingency, physicality and externality. In that case it does not really matter which external content is used in such art: even the most prosaic objects of daily life can be used because the truth does not depend on them. Hegel also refers to music in this context. Music's content is not specific and it is, as such, the 'key note' of Romanticism. Its task is 'not to echo objectivity itself [i.e. represent external objects], but rather to echo the way in which the inner self is moved in itself according to its subjectivity and inner soul [i.e. reflect feelings]' (*Ä* II, p. 261). Music does not engage with objectivity in the manner that conceptual thought does. This will be the basis of his linking music to Romantic irony, which he regards as an avoidance of serious engagement with objective social reality.

Hegel points to the need for something which is beyond art:

> we get as the final point of the Romantic *per se* the randomness of the external and the internal and a falling apart of these two sides, via which art negates itself [*sich aufhebt*] and shows the necessity for consciousness to appropriate higher forms for the grasping of truth than art is able to offer.
>
> (*Ä* I, p. 509)

The higher forms are evidently those of philosophy. Instead of being concerned with the actual results of the Idea's move into the pain and division of natural existence, philosophy's task is to show how this form of the existence of the Idea can be transcended. What, then, does this imply for the theory of art? The art form that most evidently relates to Hegel's account of why Romantic art 'negates itself' is the novel, that form which, as Bakhtin will suggest, can encompass all other literary forms, which therefore is able to incorporate any aspect of transient existence.

The prose of the modern world

It is no coincidence that there is little sustained discussion of the novel in the *Aesthetics*. There is something bizarre about Hegel's argument. In the period where philosophy reaches the stage where the Absolute, the reconciliation of our thinking and the world, can be explicated, reality, daily life, has become 'prosaic'. For Hegel the novel 'in the modern sense presupposes a reality which has been sorted out into *prose*' (*Ä* II, p. 452). The novel, in a typical Hegelian reversal, becomes concerned with how the 'poetry' of life – usually in the form of an idealistic hero – attempts to reassert its rights against the prose of daily existence. For Hegel this can end tragically or comically. The hero may founder on the contradiction of his ideals with the reality in which he tries to realize them, or he may, as often in Goethe, become reconciled with the social order by

insight into its necessities. As an empirical point about the novel of Hegel's time this is very apt. What is so odd, and is not just explicable via Hegel's evident conservatism in his later years, is why he is happy to juxtapose the highest reconciliation in philosophy with his view that life in bourgeois society has become wholly prosaic.

A notorious passage on what Hegel refers to as the 'novelistic' – that clash of novel hero and reality paradigmatically present in the figure of Don Quixote – demonstrates the oddity of Hegel's view. Hegel considers the hero who confronts the world with his ideals: 'These battles are, in the modern world, nothing but the years of apprenticeship' – he uses the word *Lehrjahre*, echoing Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* – they are 'the education of the individual via existing reality and they gain their meaning thereby'. The resultant education of the hero leads to the following:

> finally he usually does get his girl and some job or other, marries and becomes a Philistine like all the others; the wife runs the household, children inevitably arrive, the adored woman who initially was the Only one, the Angel, looks roughly like everyone else, the job involves work and unpleasantness, the marriage the burden of domestic life, and so it is that one ends up with the hangover that everyone else has.
>
> (*Ä* I, p. 568)

The passage is by the author of the most impressively consistent metaphysics of the modern era: how does Hegel reconcile its resigned cynicism with the claims of his system?

The passage makes sense in relation to Hegel's arguments about the priority of the universal concept over the contingencies of individual thinking. By putting the dialectic of recognition, which by now increasingly takes the form of accommodation to the necessities of bourgeois society, before individual productivity, Hegel undermines any attempt to show how social change is *motivated*. Motivation is subsumed into the wider structure of 'objective spirit', the realization of how individual thinking can only come to its truth via its being collectively recognized in a particular socio-historical context. Theory once again triumphs over praxis.

This is apparent in the following passage from the conclusion of the *Philosophy of History*:

> for world history is nothing but the development of the concept of freedom. But objective freedom, the laws of real freedom demand the subordination of the contingent will, for the contingent will is formal. If the objective is reasonable in itself, then insight into this reason must be based on this, and then the essential moment of subjective

> freedom is also present. . . . Philosophy moves to contemplation through its antipathy to the movements of direct passions in reality . . . Only the realization that what has happened and happens daily not only does not happen without God but is also essentially his own work can reconcile *Geist* with world history and reality.[22]

Philosophy makes Romantic art redundant: it transcends the ethereal and contingent data of everyday life – the 'direct passions' – which have now become part of art in the novel. Hegel's judgment that the novel, in common with all art, is therefore a form of *Geist* which no longer fulfils our highest need, and will become redundant in the face of philosophy, has most recently been rejected in Rorty's contention that philosophy should become a kind of literature. More obviously, the view is contradicted by the stubborn refusal of the novel to disappear from the repertoire of means we use to make sense of the modern world. It is worth looking briefly ahead to an influential later view of the novel to suggest why Hegel's view is so questionable.

In his *Theory of the Novel*, written in the face of the outbreak of the First World War, Georg Lukács works at times with Hegelian arguments. He also, though, has assimilated key aspects of Romantic thinking, and of Kierkegaard. In consequence, he completely changes the interpretation of the way in which modern reality has become 'prosaic'. For Lukács the prosaic development of reality and the individual's resultant sense of alienation, graphically expressed by Hegel in the passage on the novel's hero, become the main problem. The novel becomes the expression of 'transcendental homelessness', the locus of the search for meaning in a post-theological culture. The search for meaning in a world where the significance of individual existence is subordinated to the progress of the general is not passed over, as it is in Hegel, as a necessity which can be coped with by philosophical insight into how it could never be otherwise. The First World War, of course, made this a little difficult.

The dominant idea of Lukács' book is the Romantic realization that the subject can never achieve that absolute self-coincidence Hegel sees as expressed in philosophy. 'Irony', the central term in Lukács' theory, which he borrows from Friedrich Schlegel, is the expression of the ultimate failure of subjectivity to find a truth which would make it at home in the world. It is the subject's failure to coincide with itself within a wider totality that is *constitutive* of the novel form. This argument has evident links to the idea in Schelling's *PA* that in the modern era 'Poesie' is 'only possible for him who can create for himself a mythology, a closed circle of "Poesie" out of his very limitations' (1/5, p. 444/27). It also involves the Romantic realization of the failure of the reflection model of subjectivity: the subject continually fails to grasp itself in the mirror of the subjective and the objective world. Instead, then, of the work of

art being transcended into something higher, it becomes a reminder of how subjects can never attain a total sense of their place in the world.

Aesthetics and non-identity

Adorno claims in *Aesthetic Theory* that:

> Hegel's philosophy fails in relation to the beautiful: because he equates reason and reality . . . he hypostasises the structuring of all being by subjectivity as the Absolute. He regards the non-identical solely as a fetter on subjectivity, instead of determining the experience of non-identity as the telos of the aesthetic subject, as its emancipation.[23]

Adorno's concern is with the repressions that are inseparable from the constitution of subjectivity in modernity, which he sees as being revealed, and transcended, but only on the level of appearance, in art. Hegel's philosophy, which Adorno regards as the paradigmatic philosophy of modernity, fails to express that aspect of subjectivity which resists being subsumed into generality, such as the irreducibility of pain or loss for the individual suffering it. This has roots in the Romantic idea that art should 'represent the unrepresentable', being always inherently incomplete, but therefore able to point to what completion would be by the sense of lack it engenders. The 'non-identical' might sound rather like Derrida's *différance*. Derrida does talk about the violence inherent in the reduction of difference to identity, but he reverses the problem Adorno sees in Hegel by making subjectivity an effect of its indefinable other, language. If what is having the violence done to it, the subject, is constituted as itself by its necessary other, language, it becomes hard to say what is suffering the violence.[24] The problem of reflection theory recurs even here: what suffers must already have some form of existence prior to its being violated by its other.

Adorno's objection to Hegel's philosophy is connected with the problems inherent in the philosophy of reflection, although Adorno does not always escape these problems himself. Hegel presupposes that the model of mind's 'being with itself in the other' means that thought and its other are identical. For Adorno this leads to the danger of assuming that the way the world is conceptualized at any time is ultimately self-legitimating, because it always already involves the union of the subject and the object. For Adorno there can be no such legitimation. This again brings him close to Derrida, whose philosophy *is* important for the way in which it has reminded us of the dangers of 'identity thinking', albeit from a position which cannot itself ultimately be sustained. For Hegel the way a period conceptualises the world is eventually validated by its being part of *Geist's* immanent recognition of itself.

Adorno's attention to the 'non-identical' which cannot be subsumed

into the wider truth of *Geist* stems also from his conviction, derived from Marx and Max Weber, that the modern world is characterized by rationalization of all spheres of social life. The process of rationalization functions much as Hegel's philosophy can be seen as functioning: it only admits the particular to the extent that the particular can be made to fit the general. This has important and not always negative implications in the development of legal systems and in the natural sciences, and even on the level of the exchange process. This is combined, though, with growing problems regarding the meaning of these developments.

The sphere of meaning production itself becomes administered in the form of what Adorno and Horkheimer term the 'culture industury', which might be regarded as the perverted form the 'new mythology' takes in administered capitalism. Adorno sees the side of Hegel's philosophy which subsumes the particular as prefiguring the way the modern world has become dominated by general systems of rationalization. Rationalization does not lead to the realization of freedom which Kant and German idealism saw as the task of Reason. The Understanding comes to function as the machine that the idealists were afraid of: it does not become part of the more important task of Reason. This leads to Adorno's insistence on that which cannot be rationalized away – the non-identical – as the locus of emancipation. Adorno does not renounce reason. Instead he insists on the awareness of the repressions involved in what reason has been so far.

It is important to remember that the aim of Hegel's philosophy is largely the idealist aim. Habermas gives a useful reminder of the historical significance of what Hegel was trying to do: for Hegel the 'unification of *single* individuals with their *particular* community in the horizon of a *general* cosmic order which myth achieves should be reproduced by philosophy'.[25] The advance on a mythological order is that the legitimation of that order has to be rationally demonstrated. The development of modern art can, though, be seen as an indication of why philosophy is unable to perform the role of meaning creation that mythology performed in earlier societies. Schelling's remarks on the need to create a closed circle of mythology hint at this, as do some of the Romantic conceptions of art. It does seem that the most significant aesthetic production in modernity – Kafka, Proust, Schönberg, Charlie Parker – is resistant to being integrated into the dominant ways in which the society where it originated makes sense of things. The hopes for a new aesthetic mythology do not materialize. The modern art that we still engage with is important precisely because of its resistance to generality. Its meaning is not exhausted by analysis, its being assimilated to a general viewpoint, and it has a coherence which is not that of a coherent argument. Such art may not fulfil our highest need: it does seem clear, though, that it can suggest why Hegel's philosophy could not do so either.

Notes

1 For example Richard Kroner, *Von Kant zu Hegel*, 2 vols, Tübingen 1924. References to Schelling throughout are to Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schellings *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, I Abteilung Vols 1–10; II Abteilung, Vols 1–4, Stuttgart 1856–61, Stuttgart 1856–61. The reference includes as the second page number after the / the page numbers of the easily accessible *F. W. J. Schelling Ausgewählte Schriften*, Vols 1–6, Ffm 1985.

2 I have used the following editions of Hegel: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*PG*), Vol. 3 Werkausgabe, ed. Eva Moldauer, Karl Markus Michel, Ffm 1970; *Wissenschaft der Logik* I, II, (*L* I, *L* II), Vols 5, 6 Werkausgabe, Ffm 1969; *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vols 18, 19, 20 Werkausgabe (*GP* I, II, III, Ffm 1971); *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (*E*), ed. Friedhelm Nicolin, Otto Pöggeler, Hamburg 1959; *Asthetik*, Vols 1 and 2 (*Ä* I, II), ed. Bassenge, Berlin, Weimar 1965.

3 Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Ffm 1985, p. 31.

4 Jürgen Habermas: 'Arbeit und Interaktion. Bemerkungen zu Hegels "Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes" ', in ed. Gerhard Göhler, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel Frühe politische Systeme*, Ffm, Berlin, Vienna, p. 789 [translation reprinted in Volume II, pp. 558–81. R. S.].

5 Henrich, *Selbstverhältnisse*, Stuttgart, 1982 p. 155.

6 Hans Georg Gadamer: 'Die verkehrte Welt', in ed. Hans Friedrich Fulda and Dieter Henrich, *Materialien zu Hegel's 'Phänomenologie des Geistes'*, Ffm 1973, p. 113 [translation reprinted in Volume III, pp. 131–47. R. S.].

7 Henrich, *Selbstverhältnisse*, p. 160.

8 ibid., p. 190.

9 See my 'Music, Language and Modernity', in ed. Andrew Benjamin, *The Problems of Modernity*, London, New York, 1989 pp. 67–85.

10 Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Etre et le néant* (*EN*), Paris 1943.

11 Manfred Frank, *Die Unhintergehbarkeit von Individualität*, Ffm 1986, p. 34.

12 Ludwig Feuerbach, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, ed. Gerhart Schmidt, Ffm 1983, p. 76. As we shall see in the chapter on Nietzsche, Nietzsche is often indebted to Schelling, Feuerbach and others in ways that have not often been noticed. Compare the following from *The Twilight of the Idols*:

> The *other* idiosyncrasy of the philosophers . . . consists of changing round the last and the first. They put that which comes at the end – unfortunately! for it should not come at all – the 'highest concepts', that is the most general, the emptiest concepts, the last puff of evaporating reality, at the beginning as the beginning'.
>
> (Nietzsche, *Sämtlichte Werke*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Munich, Berlin, New York, 1980, vol. 6, p. 76)

13 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung* 1841–2 (*PO*), ed. Manfred Frank, Ffm 1977.

14 Michel Foucault, *Politics Philosophy Culture*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, New York and London, 1988, p. 14.

15 Hartmut Scheible, *Wahrheit und Subjekt: Ästhetik im bürgerlichen Zeitalter*, Bern, 1984, p. 290.

16 Oliver Sacks, *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, London 1986, pp. 218–19.

17 Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, Ffm 1973, p. 103.

18 ibid.

19 Freud, *Studienausgabe*, Ffm 1982, Vol. 9, p. 559.

20 Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, London 1984.

21 Scheible, op. cit., p. 359.

22 G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 605.

23 Adorno, op. cit., p. 119.

24 For more on this issue see Peter Dews: 'Adorno, Poststructuralism and the Critique of Identity', in *The Problems of Modernity*, op. cit., pp. 1–22.

25 Jürgen Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus*. Ffm 1976, p. 103.

Philosophy of Religion

Christianity and secularity in Hegel's concept of the state*

Walter Jaeschke

Even if it is itself disputed, Hegel's insight that the philosophical understanding of the rational is accomplished in the apprehension of what is present and actual demands that his interpreter investigate Hegel's own historical situation. Determining the relationship between a philosophy that at least intends to be orientated towards the present and the 'actuality' in the context of which it occurs cannot simply be added to the interpretation proper as a further step. It is, rather, fundamental for the understanding of that philosophy, not because the philosophy is a trivial mirror image of its actuality, but because it can intend and accomplish the knowledge of the truth only in so far as it outlines solutions to the problems of its time.

Hegel formulated this insight into the relation of every philosophy (especially his own) to actuality most tellingly in the Preface to his *Philosophy of Right* (1821). But it holds true equally for all the other parts of his system. The connection with the given problem-situation of the time is constitutive for his philosophy and is always already theoretically formulated. Up to now it has been accorded attention principally in the interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of right. Only rarely has it been noticed in regard to his philosophy of religion. His claim that his philosophy simply comprehends the idea of Christianity is by and large judged against the standard of an almost atemporally understood, originally pure Christianity. Depending on the intentions of the interpreter, Hegel's views on the philosophy of religion are consequently either reinterpreted until they fit this standard or they are rejected for not conforming to it – which might have been foreseen from the outset, given such an interpretation. Both procedures lead to serious consequences, in particular with regard to the border-line between the philosophies of right and of religion, that is Hegel's position on the relationship between Christianity and the state. If one believes himself already in possession of the concept of Christianity

and then subjects this to Hegel's demand that the state be founded on the principle of Christianity, Hegel's principle necessarily changes its political character with the changing concept of Christianity. But it is not legitimate to objectify Hegel's 'Christian principle' unquestioningly as an apparently original and unchangeably fixed concept of Christianity. It is just as unjustifiable to identify his Christian principle with one of the strains of Christianity dominating the field in Hegel's time. Within Protestantism alone the spectrum reached from vulgar theological rationalism, which was politically close to early liberalism, through Schleiermacher to Hengstenberg's neo-orthodoxy, which was also politically tied to the Restoration party. Hegel's notion of Christianity would be dependent upon the flexibility of the various theological interpretations only if it were not based on his own concept of Christianity, a concept developed out of his historical situation without, however, becoming something merely historically relative in the historicist sense.

I would like to treat the relationship of Christianity and secularization in Hegel's concept of the state by starting with his delineation of the relationship of religion and state. His specific definition of Christianity will then be discussed and, finally, I will try to give an answer to the question whether the concept of the state in Hegel's system is of a Christian or a secular character.

It seems to me desirable to go back a little further in order to avoid two contemporary misconceptions of Hegel's position in respect to the modern state: on the one hand, the misconception that according to Hegel the state has been emancipated from its Christian origins, that is that it is a secular state and that it even owes this emancipation to Christian motives and, on the other hand, the misconception that for Hegel the state was immediately dependent on religion or, as Franz Rosenzweig formulated it in his great and still unequalled work *Hegel and the State*, that the state in the late Hegel had lost its worldly soul. To anticipate: the hallmark of the Hegelian solution seems to me to reside in the fact that both of these points of view, which are mutually exclusive and do not seem to allow a third alternative, are erroneous.

I SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE (1821)

To a point of view orientated only towards epoch-making events such as the Reformation or the French Revolution, the concept of a unity of state and religion sketched by Hegel in his later Berlin years can easily appear as a regression, at least in principle, from the separation of state and religion in which has been seen (and not incorrectly so) an essential element in the formation of the modern concept of the state. In the debate whether Hegel's system is basically progressive or reactionary

such a mixture would have to count as a point heavily favouring the characterization of his philosophy of law and religion as reactionary. But Hegel's concept is clarified by locating it both in the speculative philosophy of religion and its social context, namely, the Prussian policies on religion and the competing conception of a 'Christian state' demanded by the German Restoration party in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is paradigmatic for Hegel's programme, which aims to comprehend actuality, that his conception can only be completely understood and judged if one keeps in mind these two aspects: the properly systematic and the contemporary political application. The genesis of the concept of the state that Hegel built upon the principle of Christianity, the concept of a unity of religion and state, can be completely understood only in the context of the legal principles and of changes in political emphasis in Prussia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For Church policy underwent an extraordinarily important transitional phase from the concept of community in the Enlightenment and Pietism to the conception of the institutional Church, which won out in Germany around the middle of the century. Hence I cannot entirely avoid going into the religious policies of the time, at least marginally. The specific earmarks of the Hegelian solution can even be interpreted as a supplement, though also as a contrast, to official religious policy; only in this light does its full weight become apparent.

Only with qualification does Hegel's solution agree with the Prussian Church reforms of the early nineteenth century. In contrast with the strong contemporary striving after unification, not only of the Protestant but of all the Christian Churches, in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel welcomes the confessional divisions as an indispensable step on the road to the true state – a view that is widely shared even today. His sharp plea for the separation of the spheres of religion and state brings him implicitly into contradiction with the Church policy of the government. This is probably the reason for his persistent but otherwise hardly understandable silence not only on the details of the Church's constitution, but also on the central Church-political problem of the time, namely, the Prussian Union. Hegel shares the Prussian reformers' concept of the state in so far as it is not understood as a mere 'regime of necessity' but as a 'cultural state' and an ethical state. But he does not share it in so far as the reformers held that the state should pursue an active religious politics. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* ties all upbringing to the family, but certain tasks of education for membership in the society are left to civil society as the 'universal family' (par. 239). It is otherwise in religious politics. The duties of the state to the religious communities given in paragraph 270 of the *Philosophy of Right* do not legitimate the contemporary broad interpretation of the right of the territorial government to intrude actively into the form of church life – a right that had retreated into the back-

ground during the Enlightenment. They give no support at all for a *ius in sacra* but rather keep within the frame of the traditional *iura circa sacra*, as they were codified in the Prussian book of law in the *ALR* (*Allgemeines Landrecht*), which Hegel, as we know, studied while a young tutor in Frankfurt. Yet at the level at which the relation of Christianity and the state is to be understood as a legal question, Hegel makes the division between the two spheres even more sharply than Prussian law. This *ius in sacra* is not included in the principles which he derives from the power of princes in the *Philosophy of Right*: Hegel's monarch is not *summus episcopus*. Hegel denies the religious elevation of the monarch anchored in the law of his time, and his concept of the Church does not tend toward the institutional Church of the later nineteenth century but remains orientated towards the so-called collegial system of the Enlightenment, based on natural law. 'The religious society of individuals' is elevated into a community. In the lectures on the philosophy of religion (1821) again 'community' (*Gemeinde*) is the central concept. Neither the individual nor the Church but rather the community 'possesses the infinite power and authority [needed] for its development, [for] the progressive determination of its doctrine'.[1]

On the other hand, Hegel avoids the danger implicit in the conception of the contemporary law that, because of its extensive protection and service functions for the communities, the state might sink to a mere emergency institution and a tool for religious interests – a danger that first became acute not in the Prussia of Frederick II but in the polemics of the early Romantics against the Enlightenment's mechanistic conception of the state. Still, Hegel does not let himself be led astray by this danger into granting the state the right to decide religious questions in the narrower sense. Since the state has nothing to do with the content of religious representation, the tie between civil law and the three confessions, as settled at the Vienna Congress (1815), is inapplicable according to the *Philosophy of Right*. The state enjoys its higher legitimation even without intrusion into the sphere of religious life: it is itself rational, ethical life and the actualization of freedom. Even for the integration of the state religion is not necessary, for the 'best means of effecting this is through philosophical insight into the essence of the state, though, in default of that, a religious frame of mind may lead to the same result' (par. 270). Hegel's solution, informed as much with the motives of the Enlightenment as with the new 'substantial' concept of the state, avoids the dangers of both previous historical attempts. Church and State are completely separated.

However, Hegel's separation of Church and state is at first vitiated in the *Philosophy of Right* by an unclarity in the definition of the concept of the state. Hegel's emphasis on ethical life as opposed to religion permits two interpretations. On the one hand, there might be two forms

of ethical life, one in the state and the other in religion, so that the ethical state simply does not need the ethical life of religion. But this interpretation has no basis in the text. On the other hand, religion and ethical life may constitute separate spheres: ethical life is non-religious and autonomous, and religion is unethical. It is indeed Hegel's view that religion, in so far as it does not recognize the state as ethical and instead directs itself polemically against the actualized rationality of the state, constitutes such an anti-ethical force. Religion is the foundation, but *only* the foundation and not the substance, of the ethical life. It contains indeed the 'deepest confirmation', but only 'as the inward, abstract side' which is merely added to the ethical relationships of the 'actual rationality' of the state. In religion the ethical mode of life is only borrowed from the state and reduced to a lesser form: it is dependent upon faith, authority and subjective conviction and is not the self-consciousness of political reason. The secular state, precisely as the ethical state, possesses its justification in itself and does not need religion.

II UNITY OF STATE, RELIGION, AND PHILOSOPHY (1827–31)

Although the position of the *Philosophy of Right*, with its strict separation of Church and state, does not actually mention Protestantism, it is closest to agreeing with a dyarchic conception commonly referred to as the Lutheran doctrine that the state and Church constitute two different kingdoms. Yet Hegel dealt extensively with the relationship between Church and state again near the end of his Berlin years. A well-known German jurist correctly pointed out that in paragraph 522 of the *Encyclopaedia* the problem 'is formulated at a peak of spiritual reflection which has not since been achieved'.[2] Superficially, the difference from the *Philosophy of Right* lies in the emphasis on the opposition between the confessions, to which is now assigned the contradiction between freedom and authority that had been assigned earlier to the opposition between philosophy and religion. But what is decisive in the *Encyclopaedia* is the modified definition of the relationship between religion and the ethical life by which Hegel clearly, though not explicitly, corrects the position of the *Philosophy of Right*. He now emphasizes the substantiality of religion for the ethical life and the state, and so excludes a duplication of conscience into a religious and an autonomous ethical conscience. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel himself was caught in the separation of ethical life and religion – now criticized as the 'monstrous error of our times' – precisely because he tried there to overcome an abstract opposition between the state as necessity on the one hand and religion on the other. His assignment of an autonomous ethical life to the state freed from religious modes of justification only transferred the previous rupture

between religiosity and the secular state of the Enlightenment to religion and the ethical life, thereby sharpening it more than anything else. For, divorced from the ethical life of the state, religion is a mere abstractum, and falls to Hegel's criticism that taking abstraction to be valid against actuality means destroying actuality. Hegel concerned himself from the mid–1820s with the mediation of precisely this opposition. And here lies the reason for the interest his philosophy of religion acquires for the religious policy of the Prussian government. It is in the concept of ethical life that Hegel now wants first to achieve the reconciliation of the different factors of state power, religion and philosophy. Therefore, this concept possesses a distinctly greater significance for Hegel's conception than the much-discussed distinction between civil society and the state, which Hegel worked out quite insufficiently. All the same, Hegel is not proposing a totally new concept. Already in his earlier years at Jena he dealt with religion and philosophy exclusively within the context of the ethical life. The unity of religion and ethical life is initially obscured by the systematic detachment of the forms of 'absolute spirit' – art, religion and philosophy – from 'objective spirit' that occurred in 1807. Not until the *Encyclopaedia*, paragraph 552, does Hegel again emphasize the close mutual ties which remain despite the separation of religion: religion is only 'thinking ethical life, i.e. ethical life becoming conscious of the free university of its concrete essence', and 'it is therefore vain to seek true religion and religiousness outside of ethical spirit'. This sketch of a reconciliation between state, religion and philosophy constitutes Hegel's 'last word' on this subject; his last word is not the supposed confession of the failure of his 'political Protestantism' in the chapter on the 'passing of the community' at the end of his lectures on the philosophy of religion of 1821. The conclusion to those lectures in only a reflection of the *Philosophy of Right*, which appeared in the same year and mentions Protestantism as a political principle only in the Preface. The task of ordering penultimate and ultimate views should be reserved for historical, developmental considerations, so often tabooed as mere philology.

The accomplishment of the aforesaid reconciliation of state, religion and philosophy demands a significant modification in the common understanding of religion. Hegel recognizes perfectly well that 'holiness' in opposition to 'worldliness' seems to belong to the specific form or religion, but he rejects this separation of religion, which is complementary to the profanity of the state, as a form not corresponding to the concept. The opposition which at first seems to hold between the state (as *Notstaat*) and religion, and then between ethical life and religion, finally shows itself as a discrepancy between the concept of religion and its historically real, but none the less untrue, shape, in which religion opposes the desired reconciliation with the state and philosophy. Hegel's limitation of the conceptually adequate shape of religion to the sphere of ethical

life must be sharply distinguished from the Enlightenment's reduction of religion to morality, which vulgar theological rationalism was still perpetrating in Hegel's day. The limitation is much more a consequence of the specifically idealistic concept of religion, which is condensed into a slogan in Hegel's talk about the 'Christian principle'.

III THE 'CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE': SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF FREEDOM

The traditional opposition between state and Church, religion, ethical life and philosophy can only be overcome in the present because it is in itself sublated (*aufgehoben*). The opposed are one in the concept of freedom. In world history in the broad sense, including the history of religion, this concept is recognized in the principle of Christianity, in the 'self-consciousness of freedom'. It is from the definition of the idea of Christianity as the self-consciousness of freedom that Hegel attempts his mediation of philosophy, religion and the state.

It was not freedom in general that entered the world through Christianity, for then there would be no pre-Christian history in so far as history, according to Hegel, is precisely the progress of the consciousness of freedom. But it is part of Christianity, both as a religion and as a world-historical form, that freedom be attributed to humans as such, not merely in some limited respect, but as persons. This concept of a person constitutes the foundation of Hegel's scheme for a state built on the principle of Christianity. Its world-historical development has both a religious-philosophical aspect and a legal-philosophical aspect. In ancient Greece the moment of subjectivity, displaced from the substantial ethical life of the state, unfolds into the beautiful demi-gods, while the concept of a person in Roman law demands the supplement of the one highest individual, the divine Caesar. While Hegel thinks he can recognize the rudiments of the concept of subjectivity in the ethical life of the *polis*, in the traditional Greek religion, and even in Plato's philosophy, he sees a close though not unproblematic connection between the concept of a person in Roman law and in Christianity. The plan of the historical section of the lectures on the philosophy of religion constitutes an index of the importance Hegel gave to this connection. While he changed the order of the Jewish and Greek religions in 1827, he still maintained that the immediate presupposition of Christianity was not the religion of the Old Testament, but the Roman world. Only with a view to the actualization of spirit which knows itself to be free, the innermost principle of world history, can we make sense out of this often-criticized order.

In Roman law's concept of a person Hegel sees only the abstract legal moment of personality, however. The inadequacy of this concept of a

person based on the ability to possess property is apparent to him in the fact that slaves and children remain excluded. But he does not see the transition to the religious concept of a person merely as the broadening of the Roman concept to the previously excluded groups, but rather as a new conception, which he ties historically to two elements of the religious imagination. The polemical turn against all existence with which Christianity enters the world, its sublation of all particularity and personality through the ignominious death on the cross, demonstrate the insufficiency of a concept of person orientated only towards the ability to possess property: the fate of Jesus is its existing negation – only, however, because it is represented as the fate of the God-man. The positive moment in the conception of the personality and freedom of the human lies in the religious knowledge that the absolute Being is a specific self-consciousness, and man has infinite value as man, not just in other respects. Expressed theologically: the human is the object of God's infinite love. It is crucial for the proper understanding of the concept of free subjectivity that one interpret the notion God-man not through a doctrine of two natures but as the expression at the level of representation of the concept of absolute spirit. The foundation of the representation God-man is the inseparability of subjectivity and its other, objectivity: God is no longer opposed to the subject as a mere other but rather as the other of the subject itself; and in this other the subject has its self-consciousness. Herein lies the specifically Christian form of the connection between the religious and the ethical, in opposition to the preceding Greek and Roman forms. The religious overcoming of the subject-object opposition is the unavoidable complement to the actualization of the ethical legal concept of a person. They are both comprehended in Hegel's concept of the Christian principle, in the 'self-consciousness of freedom'.[3] It is not some representation of 'Christian faith' but this concept of the subject as the speculative identity of subjectivity and objectivity, of abstract self-relation and self-relation in the other, that lies at the basis of Hegel's talk of freedom as the principle of the Christian world and therefore as the principle of the true state in distinction from the ancient state.

One thing is crucial to the consequences of Hegel's insistence upon the Christianity of the state for religious policy: that the principle of Christianity, the concept of free subjectivity, is not to be thought of on the basis of a personal revelation of God, as was taken for granted in Hegel's day and still is often today. Man is not constituted a free and self-conscious person through a 'personal' relation to a personal God, but rather, in strict opposition to this, through the sublation of such a religious relation to an 'infinite ghost' as Hegel calls it, in the concept of spirit. On the other hand, Hegel's concept of subjectivity cannot be reduced to that of the *causa sui* and dismissed, even if one must grant that precisely because of its philosophical superiority it may be 'quite useless' in public

and civil law. In fact it is difficult to define the juridical personality of the state satisfactorily in terms of Hegel's concept of a person. Hegel does not believe in the least that after the world-historical supersession of the concept of person contained in Roman law, this religiously and philosophically grounded concept of person could immediately serve as the foundation for the philosophy of right. For this reason, he attempts in his *Philosophy of Right* with regard to the contemporary debate only to modify the property-based concept of a person from the point of view of his concept of subjectivity. Nevertheless, his philosophical point of departure in the concept of subjectivity is perfectly suited to framing an interpretation of the individual subject and his actuality in the modern state.

IV THE 'PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE' AS FOUNDATION OF THE FREE STATE

Hegel's distinction between the Christian principle and its realization in the world fosters the misunderstanding that this principle appeared in the Christian religion at the end of its pre-Christian prehistory, as something finished and awaiting only its embodiment. In that case the world-historical appearance of the idea of Christianity would constitute in principle the end of the absolute history of religion; its actualization would be the object of world history alone. But the embodiment coincides with the concrete construction of the principle itself, and this constitutes the inescapable presupposition of the success of the practical-political realization. Such an understanding of 'principle' is opposed to any thought of it as originally given. Hegel does not understand the history of the Christian principle – a history that comprehends both aspects, construction and embodiment – through the mythical scheme of a lost but pure origin and a *restitutio in integrum*. At the beginning of this dual history there is neither a perfect principle nor a completed form. For this reason Hegel does not need to denounce either the liaison between Church and state in the political theology of Eusebius of Caesaria or the late medieval opposition between *imperium* and *ecclesia* as evil apostasy and error. In early Christianity the subject neither constructed worldliness as his own objectivity nor experienced it as such; the subject therefore appears at first as a revolutionary against worldliness and to that degree is anti-ethical. The construction and knowledge of its own objectivity are begun through the stabilization of the community and continued in the Church. The Christian principle can only realize itself in the world if it, as Church, appears as a self-sufficient form of ethical life, which, however, is still at odds with the world and does not strive for a reconciliation with the world but for a subordination of the world. It finds its adequate actuality

only in that form of Christianity in which the opposition between Church and state is sublated, and for Hegel that means Protestantism.

It is an often unnoticed paradox that under the title the 'Protestant principle', Hegel promoted a form for the political realization of the idea of Christianity which is most sharply opposed to the Augustinian-Lutheran doctrine of two realms. While one can consider the opposition of Church and state in the *Philosophy of Right* (par. 270) as a relic of the dyarchic conception, in paragraph 552 of the *Encyclopaedia*, precisely where he elevated Protestantism to a political principle, Hegel sketches a solution which is strictly opposed to Reformation Protestantism, even though it is no less anti-Catholic. The main thought in Hegel's political Protestantism is not a two-kingdoms doctrine but the unity of religion and state. This unity is not, however, an immediate coincidence, neither an 'enthusiastic' nor a reactionary Christianization of the ruling order; it is founded solely upon the idea that *one* concept of freedom and subjectivity governs both religion and state.

It would be unhistorical and unfruitful simply to compare the discrepancies between Hegel's particular concept of Protestantism and the Reformation doctrine of Church and state and conclude that Hegel simply made a mistake. Just like the Christian principle itself, its so-called Protestant political formulation needs an internal construction, in the context of the different forms of its political realization. Neither Hegel's appeal to the Christian principle nor his founding of the state on the specifically Protestant principle is the monster of a narrow-minded confessionalism, which contests the right of other religions or confessions to exist within the state and therefore would set narrow limits on the political realization of the Hegelian formula. An indication of how non-confessional Hegel's Protestant principle is can be seen in the fact that the man who embodied the Protestant principle most purely in Hegel's eyes was a Catholic: René Descartes. The principle of Protestantism is neither '*sola gratia*' nor '*sola scriptura*', but rather 'the obstinacy which does honour to mankind, to refuse to recognize in conviction anything not ratified by thought'.[4] Externally considered, this principle can be called Protestant because Hegel thought it actualized in his late Berlin years in the Prussia of Frederick II. But it is decisive that those moments which Hegel specifically calls Protestant – the rejection of all authority, the freedom of conscience and the sublation of all positivity – all fit the Christian principle of subjectivity, at least in its abstract and subjective side, and that it is essentially the history of the actualization of this principle of subjectivity which Hegel wants to comprehend. As in Pietism, the individual can just as well get stuck in a polemical opposition to positive religion and a positive state that only stands over against him. But, and this is where present interpretations of Hegel's Protestant principle concentrate, the individual can also

make his peace with the state, that is conscientiously accept the independent state.

But even a subjectivity domesticated in this way by the Protestant principle remains abstract and to that degree untrue. For it is an integral moment of the freedom of the subject to produce his objectivity out of himself and thus actualize his self-consciousness. The freedom which has itself as content does not remain abstract, but is rather 'destined to develop itself into objectivity, to legal, ethical and religious as well as scientific actuality'.[5] But then both state and religion must admit of sublation into moments of this objectivity in the self-consciousness of freedom. Yet as long as they are opposed both to each other and to the subject, the Christian principle has not become a political reality. In order to reach an adequate understanding of Hegel's foundation of the state upon the Christian principle of subjectivity, it is necessary to include within the concept of subjectivity both the freedom of the person that achieves determinate being in the bourgeois concept of property and also the Christian principle of the self-consciousness of freedom. But this can succeed only when one adequately grasps the religious-philosophical dimension of the concept of subjectivity. A subjectivity which, considered socially, persists in the diremption of civil society and builds its altar only within its own breast, because it cannot dare to enter the objective world of the understanding, would be for Hegel only a limited, untrue form of subjectivity: it would be a subjectivity which has not yet conceived that for Hegel the concept is the actualizing of its freedom and finding itself in its diremption.

But the question is still justified whether or not Protestantism already contains this self-actualization of subjectivity. During their collaboration in Jena, Hegel and Schelling, following the lead of Lessing, among others, set out from the assumption that Protestant Christianity too must be superseded by a 'new religion', and Hegel understood this new religion as the rebirth of the reality of reason in the ethical spirit of a free people, a spirit 'which can have the boldness to take its pure form out of its own majesty and on its own ground'.[6] But his development of his later concept of spirit allows the later Hegel to work out a new understanding of Protestantism and then to regard Protestantism as the ultimate form in the realm of religion in general. To be sure, his contemporaries' understanding of the principle of freedom in religion is not regarded as the final form by Hegel. Yet for the perfection of this principle a new religion is not called for, but only a consistent and complete carrying out of the Christian principle of subjectivity.

This completion, however, does not itself occur within the sphere of religion. Even if Protestantism has sublated the form of belief in authority characteristic of an earlier epoch, its own character as religion prevents a completely adequate grasp of the idea of Christianity. Just as religion

has indeed the truth for its content, but only in the inadequate form of representation (*Vorstellung*), it also grasps the Christian principle only in the forms of feeling and representation, and that means that all religion grasps the principle of freedom in an unfree mode. The end of religion is determined both by its distinction from philosophy in general and by its function as the foundation of the state. This is not contradicted by the fact that there can be situations in which the Christian community conceives of itself as a corrective against the state and as the representative of the Christian principle. It can assume this function only under two conditions. The community has as such no immediate political function in the state, for such a function would wipe out Hegel's strict organizational separation of Church and state. Further, the community can be such a corrective only if it does not try to found the state immediately upon or obligate it to specific articles of faith inaccessible to the universality of reason, but rather formulates as best it can the Christian principle of the self-consciousness of freedom. Complete knowledge of this principle is not, however, to be found in the sphere of religion. Therefore, in Hegel's time religion has to surrender to philosophy the task of adequately grasping the Christian principle. Because of the very concept of religion, it cannot overcome the fact that it can only represent the principle of free subjectivity, which religion first formulated, in an external fashion, not with the necessary universality. As previously mentioned, the progress of Christianity towards knowing the unlimited personhood (*Personhaftigkeit*) of man is seen by Hegel in the religious representation 'that self-consciousness – an actual human being – is the absolute being'. Yet for religion, this absolute being is necessarily a determinate, individual man 'not yet Man, or self-consciousness in general'.[7] And it is for this reason that in the religious consciousness objectivity remains opposed to the subject as determinateness which cannot be sublated. The knowledge that not one self-consciousness, but rather self-consciousness in general, is the absolute being belongs solely to the philosophical comprehension of the Christian idea. The concept of spirit is revealed only to philosophy, and therefore the infusion of worldly actuality with the principle of subjectivity – in particular the actualization of the true state – can only succeed on the foundation of this philosophical knowledge. For if the concept of spirit is not grasped correctly, the positivity of the state remains untranscended, and the subject cannot comprehend the state as his other, in which he has his self-consciousness and his actuality.

V THE INADEQUACY OF THE CONCEPT OF SECULARIZATION

Hegel's foundation of the state on the Christian principle is misinterpreted today under the influence, usually unconscious, of a concept of seculariz-

ation which was itself drawn up precisely in opposition to the 'culture Protestantism' interpretation of Christianity that took its bearings from Hegel. Hegel's solution does indeed stand in contrast to an ideal of the religious, and ultimately theocratic, state, but it is no less opposed to the emancipation of an autonomous ethical life and rational law from religion, to leaving political matters to their own peculiar laws, and to the possibility of founding a political order satisfying the demands of conscience of a means–ends form of rationality. He does not ground the Christianity of the state in its being freed by Christianity for worldliness and only thus, as profane and autonomously ethical, being at the same time the true Christian state, that is conforming to the Christian desacralization of the world. The specific character of the idea of Christianity is neither the dominance of a religion that has been set apart nor the emancipation of the state from Christianity out of Christian motives but the overcoming of this opposition. The state informed with the Christian principle does not rest either upon the infusion of something non-worldly into the world or upon the profanation of an originally non-worldly substance. It is governed much more by the principle of subjectivity: not a subjectivity which is merely thrown back upon itself and stands only abstractly over against objectivity (*Verdinglichung*), and which is therefore untrue, but a complete, free subjectivity, which actualizes its freedom by giving itself its objectivity in the state and finding itself there. To speak of secularization is inappropriate not because the word is loaded with pejorative connotations for Hegel,[8] but because, according to the more recent theory, the concept of secularization demands as its complement[9] the concept of faith as something holy and non-profane. Hegel's interest is totally directed to overcoming this cleavage of actuality. The kingdom of God is precisely the kingdom of the spirit realized by men and in men, without, however, therefore ceasing to be the kingdom of God. For the essence of God is nothing other than the essence of man and nature – otherwise it would be an essence that was nothing.[10] Because of the long history of the opposition of the two, this dialectical identity can only be expressed through the negation of the opposition between the holy and the profane.

Hegel's concept of the state is an attempt to conclude the century-long process of the double emancipation of Church from state and state from Church, but neither in the form of a final break between them through freeing the worldly nor in the form of the restoration of a theocratic unity of Church and state. His intention is rather to deny the disjunction between the secularly and the theocratically conceived state. Even the worldliness of the world-spirit must be understood with the sublation of this disjunction in mind, and the same is no less true for world history, which in its innermost nature is the history of the Christian principle. The sacredness of religion and the autonomous ethical life of the state

are to be counted as moments which must necessarily be posited as absolute in particular historical periods, but this does not demonstrate their systematic truth. According to the concept, they collapse into each other, for they proceed from the one principle of the self-consciousness of freedom. Hegel captures this unity in the concept of ethical life – of an ethical life which no longer has the moment of subjectivity outside itself, as it was in the *polis*. One could call this the 'Christian-ethical life' in order to reflect the distinction terminologically. Removed from this central concept of Hegel's philosophy of right, the state necessarily appears either as secular or as built upon religious principles. And then Hegel's granting the state divine sanction wrongly appears as a terribly mistaken identification of an isolated religion and a worldliness understood to be autonomous. This clearly would be impermissible. It would be just as wrong to maintain that the actualization of the Christian principle in the modern state demanded by Hegel would not sublate the state's neutrality only because the principle itself is already secularized. It is neither secularized nor secularizable because it was never part of a revelation or merely religious 'belief' but constitutes the rational content of Christianity, that is the self-consciousness of freedom. One need not fear, therefore, that Hegel's demand for the 'Christianness' of the state contradicts the state's neutrality towards the religious communities. In contrast with the legal situation of his time, but in complete agreement with the more recent theories concerning the relation between state and religion, Hegel sees this neutrality as a constituent of the modern state. For the 'Christian principle' is not a category within the law governing the relation between state and religion. The Christianity of the state built on this principle cannot be formulated in terms of such a law. Its Christian character only exists in the actuality of a free subjectivity which is not dependent on the internality of a religious faith. This subjectivity is only accessible to the speculative philosophy of right; and it is accessible only to the degree that philosophy can comprehend the state as a form of the universal reason which exists as much in the individual subject as in the objective structure of actuality.

The Christian principle's neutrality towards the dominant religion is sufficiently expressed in the peculiar circumstance that Hegel took it to be less necessary to 'inform' this principle into worldliness than into the untrue forms of Christianity. He thinks the principle is better preserved in conceptual thought and better actualized in the free rationality of the state than in the religion of his day. His works are stamped with a deep mistrust of all religion which wants to hold itself separate from actual ethical life. Such a dissociated Christianity, whether founded on authority or on mere internality, is constantly tempted to come into polemical opposition to the self-conscious, objective rationality of the state. In the transformed view of his later Berlin years Hegel's sharpened eye for the

political is expressed along with the increasing precision of his system. In the alternative to the overcoming so often reaffirmed of the opposition between the sacred and the profane, the existing rationality of the state is threatened by a religiousness which has not been integrated into the Christian-ethical life. 'It is a foolish idea to give them [namely, religion and state] each a separate area, thinking that their differences will tolerate peaceful interaction and not strike out into contradiction and strife' (*Encyclopaedia*, par. 552). Hegel's philosophy offers us a key to the problem of the rift between ethical-religious conviction and formal constitution which, following the French July Revolution of 1830, he saw as the major problem of his time. Next to the development of constitutional relationships he believed the most important task was to activate the spirit of freedom within religion. This spirit is already implicit in religion, but it has not unfolded into its free actuality, while the state, on the other hand, has already sufficiently proven itself to be the guarantor of the freedom of philosophy, science and, not least, faith and conscience.

VI THEORETICAL PROBLEMS AND THE POLITICAL FAILURE OF THE HEGELIAN CONCEPTION

Hegel's programme for the reconciliation of state, religion and philosophy rests upon an extremely vulnerable view of Christianity, which is scarcely held outside the Hegelian school and is widely misunderstood even within that school. A Christian principle which knows nothing of God's person or salvation through Christ and a Protestant principle which does not bear the stamp of a return to the Holy Scripture or justification on the basis of faith alone seem to owe their names to dissimulation. Within the system, the reconciliation of the three moments of ethical life rests upon the identity of their content, that is the principle of subjectivity, which Hegel believes he can call Christian. To hindsight Hegel's extremely fragile synthesis proves to be a brilliant diagnosis which anticipates the later conflicts between Christian faith and human freedom and offers a model for overcoming them, which, however, has not been put to use. Given his speculative interpretation of Christianity, Hegel believed it possible to overcome the always dangerous opposition between religion and reason without the expedient of a fictional civil religion: possible, that is, to recognize reason in the traditional religion and on that foundation to master the political task of a modern ethical life. The ethical life will then not only guarantee the abstract freedom of the individual but also prepare the theoretical conditions for the integration of the individual into a 'substantial' freedom. Here we can see the connection with the later cultural Protestantism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the groundwork for which was laid by Hegel and Schleiermacher. Hegel's

solution crumbles, on the one hand, because the Christian-conservative political thought which became dominant in Prussia after 1840 could only see heresy in the idea of founding the state on the Christian principle of self-consciousness of freedom. On the other hand, Hegel's solution remained politically irrelevant because it presupposed the concept of religion developed in speculative idealism. Christianity simply did not recognize itself in the synthesis planned for it.

Here we state the conditions under which Hegel's conception of a unification of state and religion stands: it could only be actualized if one understood the principle of Christianity to be the self-consciousness of freedom. The state founded on this principle is neither theologically conditioned in the narrow sense of the 'Christian state' demanded by the ideologues of restoration; nor is it merely secular, since the principle on which it is built is the principle of Christianity. It seems as though, with the rejection of the speculative concept of Christianity, the chance for the political realization of the reconciliation of state, religion and ethical life which Hegel sought is given up.

I will not question here whether it was good that Christianity did not claim for its own this unity of the religious and ethical/legal aspects of subjectivity which Hegel sketched in the concept of the Christian principle. It would be hard to deny that any other attempt to conceive the unity of state and religion could only be something like the Christian and political restoration and would therefore provoke insoluble conflicts in the attempt to force a union of the specifically religious moment with a worldliness separated from it. The Hegelian left at the end of the 1830s and the beginning of the 1840s is stamped with the experience of such an opposition and of the attempt to overcome it immediately by the Christianization of the world. This is no less true for Ludwig Feuerbach than for Arnold Ruge, who at first still tried to make Hegel's concepts of the Christian and Protestant principles politically effective. But then, in a letter to K. Rosenkranz, the representative of the Hegelian centre, Ruge admitted disappointment: 'The swing to dumb Christianity and the support of aristocracy and of insipid, dishonest theology, instead of philosophy and thoroughly Protestant education, is dizzyingly fast'.[11] In this situation the cleft between the worldly state and the Christian religion becomes definitive. That this cleft is preferable to an immediate, restorative Christianization of the state needs no lengthy argument today. One need only think of the attempts in Hegel's time to create a conservative theory of the state as a political theology or of the absurd attempts to ground the law immediately in the Bible: that is to find the ground for civil law in the fact that man is created in God's image, and to ground the public code (*öffentliches Recht*) in man's status as a creature. The only alternative to this seems at present to be the total separation of public secularity and private religiousness. In regard to the political

aspect, the question arises whether this separation does not also constitute a form of alienation and therefore hide within itself political problems which might have been avoided through Hegel's programme for a state built upon the Christian principle.

It might seem as if it would be politically fitting today to see the modern state exclusively as 'secular' – if only for the sake of the necessary integration of all the social groups which cannot be counted among the Christian churches. But such an objection misses Hegel's plan for two reasons. First, in contrast with the normal legal situation at his time, and especially to the later restoration idea of a Christian state, his plan does not exclude such an integration at all, since it carries out a strict separation of state and congregation; and it does not locate the Christian or Protestant character of the state in the Credo or any particular form of the Sacrament, but only in the principle of subjectivity, thus sublating all religious and confessional bounds. Second, the proper understanding of the relation of the modern state to the principle of Christianity is not solely a question of political judgment, whether at present a secular state is to be preferred to a Christian state in Hegel's sense; it is rather a question of historical truth and the systematic understanding of the historical state of affairs.

What is decisive here is not political usefulness but the question whether there is not a connection between Christianity and the development of modern political thought, and, if there is, how this connection is to be understood. The advantage of the Hegelian programme seems to me to consist in the fact that it allows the connection between Christianity and the present concept of the state to be formulated more adequately, both historically and systematically, than other programmes – for instance, the programme founded on the concept of secularization. The Hegelian programme also has the advantage of offering at the same time a model for the unity of religion and state that at least avoids many of the problems hidden in the modern opposition between them.

Notes

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1 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Christian Religion: Lectures on the Philosophy of*

Religion, pt 3, ed. and trans. Peter C. Hodgson (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 259–60.

2 Cf. E. W. Böckenförde, 'Die Entstehung des Staats als Vorgang der Säkularisation', *Säkularisation und Utopie*, Ebracher Studien, Ernst Forsthoff zum 65. Geburtstag (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 94. n. 50.

3 Hegel, *The Christian Religion*, pp. 4–5.

4 *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

5 G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, ed. Friedhelm Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1975), par. 482n.

6 K. Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1844), p. 141.

7 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Jubiläumsausgabe, vol. 19 (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt: Fr. Frommann, 1959), p. 7; cf. *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (1894; reprint edn, New York: Humanities Press, 1968), 2:377.

8 Cf. H. Lübbe, *Säkularisierung: Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs* (Freiburg: Alber, 1965), pp. 37–8.

9 Cf. F. Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit: Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem* (Stuttgart: Friedrich Vorwerk, 1953).

10 G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, Fünfte, abermals verbesserte Auflage, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955), pp. 50, 61; cf. G. W. F. Hegel, 'Introduction: Reason in History', *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. from the German edn of Johannes Hoffmeister by H. B. Nisbet, with an Introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 44, 53.

11 A. Ruge to K. Rosenkranz, 4 April 1840, in *A. Ruges Briefwechsel und Tagebuchblatter aus den Jahren 1825–1880*, ed. P. Nerrlich (Berlin, 1886), 1:201.

Hegel's approach to religion: the dialectic of speculation and phenomenology*

Peter C. Hodgson

THE DIALECTIC OF HEGEL'S SYSTEM

Two ways of entry

Hegel envisioned his philosophical enterprise as a 'System of Science' that would encompass all finite realities in a systematic grasp of absolute reality. He also envisioned, initially at least, two ways of entry into this system. Part 1 would be 'The Science of the Experience of Consciousness' – the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807, described as a 'pathway to science' or as a 'ladder' to the absolute standpoint. Part 2 would be the *Science of Logic*, published during the period 1812–16. These represent, respectively, the phenomenological and the logical (or speculative) entrées to the system.

These two 'sciences' were combined in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), but in reverse order and with the addition of a second, middle part, the philosophy of nature. The third part of the *Encyclopaedia*, the philosophy of spirit, encompassed not only materials found in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but also those covered by the *Philosophy of Right* (1821) – the fourth and last book published by Hegel himself – and by his Berlin lecture cycles, all brought out posthumously shortly after his death in 1831; lectures on the *Philosophy of Religion* (1832), the *History of Philosophy* (1833), the *Philosophy of History* (1837) and *The Philosophy of Art* (1835). Hegel's thought about religion was not limited to the lectures on this subject but in fact pervades his entire corpus of works, since all human cultural and intellectual activities, in his words,

> find their ultimate center in the *one* thought of *God*. God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. . . . God is the one and only object of philosophy. Its concern is to occupy itself with God,

> to apprehend everything in him, to lead everything back to him, as well as to derive everything particular from God and to justify everything only insofar as it stems from God, is sustained through its relationship with him, lives by his radiance and has within itself the mind of God. Thus philosophy *is* theology, and one's occupation with philosophy – or rather *in* philosophy – is of itself the service of God.
> (P. 84 [*Ms.*])[1]

The triple mediation

Before turning directly to the subject of Hegel's religious thought, it will be helpful to gain a broader perspective on the structure of his philosophical system. This system is elaborated in terms of Hegel's famous doctrine of the triple mediation between the three branches of philosophy, which correspond to three fundamental moments of reality itself: the logical idea, nature and finite spirit. By 'logical idea' Hegel intends a Platonic-like conception of the pure idea subsisting in the abstract medium of thought, the 'realm' of purely logical relations and concepts, or in theological terms the eternal essence of God before the creation of the world. 'Nature' refers to the natural world (physical, chemical, biological), while 'spirit' in this context means finite human being (as an intersubjective reality, not merely a collection of individual subjects). 'Spirit' or 'mind' (*Geist*) is in fact the ultimate Hegelian category, descriptive of that process of embodied consciousness which encompasses finitude and sublates it yet is itself intrinsically infinite, universal and absolute. God is spirit, but so also is human being in the modality of finitude and differentiation. Spirit first appears in the form of finite consciousness, but the task of philosophy is to show spirit in its rise to its absolute essence as idea, while conversely it demonstrates that the logical idea achieves actualization (actually becomes 'idea' as distinguished from 'concept') only by means of its embodiment in nature and finite spirit. The telos of both logical idea and finite spirit is the actuality of God as absolute spirit. As absolute idea, God is the beginning of all things; as absolute spirit, the end of all things.

The three branches of philosophy are related to each other by a set of syllogisms in which each of the moments (logical idea, nature, spirit) assumes in turn the middle, mediating position between the other two. The argument here is too complex to follow in this brief presentation. Suffice it to say that Hegel wants to show that each of the moments is essential to the system as a whole and that it is precisely the logical idea which is the 'universal principle' underlying both nature and finite spirit. If either nature or spirit are raised to the status of universals, then we end with naturalism (Hume) or subjective idealism (Kant), which are monisms tending to reduce everything to one principle: matter or mind. The alternative requires the 'transcendence' of the logical idea as the

universal principle, which yields Hegel's absolute or objective idealism. If nature and spirit are to be mediated in such a way that neither is to be reduced to the principle of the other – and Hegel contends that only this mediation conforms to lived experience – then they must be mediated by a third term that is the universal principle of both, the logical idea.

Speculative and phenomenological ways of thinking

I have said that there are two ways of entry into the Hegelian system: the phenomenological and the logical or speculative. These entrées represent two ways of thinking, between which there occurs a dialectical or back-and-forth movement that is fundamental to Hegel's philosophical method.

H.-G. Gadamer has pointed out that the word 'speculative' connotes a relationship of 'mirroring' (from the Latin *speculum*). What is 'mirrored' in speculative thinking is 'the action of the subject matter itself' (*das Tun der Sache selbst*).[2] Now, according to Hegel, the ultimate subject matter or content of thinking is thought itself, the concept itself. Thus he can say that the true method, the speculative method, is 'the movement of the concept itself',[3] and the task of philosophical cognition is to mirror this movement, whether directly, as in the *Logic*, or indirectly, discovering it in the various forms and figures of nature and human history. Ferdinand Christian Baur, a historical theologian deeply influenced by Hegel, gives a precise definition of what Hegel means by speculation:

> The historian can be equal to his task only in so far as he transposes himself into the objective reality of the subject matter itself, free from the bias of subjective views and interests, whatever they may be, so that instead of making history a reflection of his own subjectivity, he may be simply a mirror for the perception of historical phenomena in their true and real form.[4]

Thus, for a Hegelian, 'speculation' means the exact opposite of what we ordinarily mean by the term in English – a kind of conjecturing on the basis of private views or interests. In fact, the latter is just what Hegel means by another term, 'reflection' (*Reflexion*), used in specific contrast to 'speculation' – namely, the reflection of our own subjectivity, which he takes to be characteristic of Enlightenment rationalism.

Speculative thinking holds as a basic principle that a coherence exists between consciousness and its object. The ultimate object of consciousness is the absolute, the true, absolute truth, thought itself. Consciousness and the absolute are obviously different, yet at the same time implicitly or potentially identical – an identity given by the absolute itself, which manifests itself to consciousness, thereby constituting the very consciousness of itself. In this sense, knowledge of the absolute is the absolute

itself. This is what makes the relationship of mirroring – that is speculative thinking – possible. It is the very nature of the absolute thus to give or disclose itself to that which is other than itself, finite consciousness; otherwise it would not *be* the absolute. We shall come back to this difficult point later on.

Now what of the other mode of thinking, the phenomenological? Phenomenology has an empirical moment because it observes and describes things as they are experienced. But it distinguishes itself from 'mere empiricism' because it does not limit itself to sense experience, and it does not surrender itself to the dogmatism that things are just as they are sensibly experienced. Rather it knows that things appear to consciousness; they are 'phenomena' of consciousness and are knowable only as such. Thus phenomenology is a science, a critical science of the experience of consciousness and its objects. It follows the odyssey of consciousness as it struggles to overcome the difference between itself and its objects, being thus ever driven on to new forms of consciousness, until finally otherness is overcome in absolute knowledge. Hegel argues that the presupposition of phenomenology is the speculative identity of consciousness and its absolute object, which is the condition of possibility for knowing any objects at all. This speculative insight is known to *us* who are carrying out the phenomenological operation, but it is not known to the consciousness being observed.

Thus we could say that phenomenology is carried on within speculative brackets, and what we have in Hegel is a *speculative* phenomenology. In this fashion he believed it possible to surmount the limitations of the Kantian critical philosophy. On the other hand, Hegel offers a *phenomenologically verified* speculation. The identity of consciousness and object is not just posited in arbitrary or *a priori* fashion but is the result of the struggle of consciousness. It gives itself in the travail and anguish, the contingency and determinacy, of human history. I believe that Hegel intended not to give methodological priority to either of these ways of thinking. Rather, philosophy would be fructified by moving back and forth between them, even though ultimately the absolute, the true, is the ground of all being and knowing.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND SPECULATIVE APPROACHES TO RELIGION

The phenomenological approach: the rise of consciousness to the absolute

We are ready now to consider specifically the dialectic of these two ways of thinking in Hegel's approach to religion. In what follows I shall limit myself to the lectures on the philosophy of religion, which Hegel delivered in Berlin four times over a ten-year span: 1821, 1824, 1827 and 1831. The

lectures are divided into three parts: the concept of religion, determinate religion (which offers a phenomenology of the development of religion from primitive magic to the higher religions of spiritual objectivity – Jewish, Greek and Roman), and the consummate or revelatory religion (Christianity). My presentation will focus on the first part, with only brief mention of the second and third parts. Also I shall be primarily concerned with Hegel's own lecture manuscript of 1821, and I shall give less attention to student transcripts of the 1824 and 1827 lectures. All these materials are in the process of being newly edited and translated. Previous editions of the lectures have conflated the sources into an editorially constructed text, which conceals the significant structural and substantive differences between the lecture series. One of my purposes – though not a primary one in this presentation – is to bring out some of these differences.[5]

First, then, the phenomenological approach to religion. Phenomenology takes its start from the crystallization of consciousness out of lower forms of life and traces its 'rise', through various stages of consciousness, to the absolute ground and telos of being. The analysis attempts to show that, at each stage of consciousness, spirit remains unfulfilled and is constantly drawn beyond itself in the quest for a more adequate and encompassing reconciliation of estranged antitheses – the antitheses of nature and spirit, of consciousness and its objects, of lordship and bondage, of the individual and society, of immanence and transcendence etc. The fragmentary and alienated character of all forms of subjective and objective human spirit finally propels spirit beyond itself to its home in absolute spirit. Paul Ricœur points out that for Hegel the rise of consciousness entails a movement in which each figure or form of consciousness finds its meaning not in what precedes but in what follows; consciousness is drawn forward towards a meaning in motion, by which each stage is sublated in the following stage. In that sense Hegel offers not an archaeology but a teleology of consciousness: spirit is constituted *as* spirit in the very dialectic of transition from one figure to the next.[6] This teleology is pursued above all in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* but also in the third part of the *Encyclopaedia* and in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Now this quest of spirit, this *erōs* for the absolute, is intrinsically a religious quest. Thus it is not surprising that Hegel should recapitulate the phenomenological approach and incorporate it into one of the sections of the first part of the philosophy of religion lectures, the part that treats the concept of religion.

In both 1821 and 1824, Hegel began part 1 of his lectures with what might be designated as a 'pre-phenomenological', experiential moment. In 1821 he describes it in a preliminary derivation of the concept of religion from religious representation (*Vorstellung*), that is from ordinary religious language, images and practices. Although only later will this

preliminary definition be raised to speculative precision, still it is able to bring into view the two essential moments of religious consciousness (self) and religious object (God), which cohere in the act of worship or cultus (pp. 185–99 [*Ms.*]). In 1824 Hegel is less confident. The 'empirical approach', as he now designates it, is limited to what presents itself in immediacy to finite consciousness, above all in the form of religious feeling. To be sure, one encounters here a consciousness of the relationship of the finite and the infinite, but it is an entirely abstract, negative relationship, an awareness of the non-identity of God and the ego. Consciousness is driven beyond this form of abstract otherness, but to what it is driven is not clear, since the religious relationship and the religious act of 'rising above' and 'passing over' to the absolute truth cannot be brought into view by empirical observation (pp. 258ff. [1824]).

The description of this act or process of 'rising' is the proper domain of the phenomenological approach, which appears in the philosophy of religion lectures (especially the earliest lectures, those of 1821) under the guise of a demonstration of 'the necessity of the religious standpoint' (p. 199 [*Ms.*]). It is not, in the first instance, God whose necessary existence is to be demonstrated, but rather that of religion. Why is religion a necessary moment of the human pilgrimage? It might be possible to answer this question in what Hegel calls 'external' fashion by demonstrating that religion is a necessary or useful means to some end, whether it be ethical, political, social or individual. However, the demonstration fails. While religion may undoubtedly play a useful social or political role, the versatile human spirit can, if it chooses, make use of other means and get along quite well without religion. Moreover, religion by its very nature can never be a means to an end other than itself; religion is its own end. The proper relation of religion to ethics and the state is not that of a means but of a condition or cause: religion is the substance of the state, not a tool of the state; attempts to reduce it to a tool inevitably distort it (pp. 199–204 [*Ms.*]).

This brings us to what Hegel calls the 'internal necessity' of religion (pp. 221–32 [*Ms.*]). The demonstration of the necessity of something implies that one starts from something other, which in this case is non-divine being, the finite world, finite consciousness, 'the whole range of worldly appearance' (pp. 224–5 [*Ms.*, W_2]). The necessity of the world is to transcend its finitude, to reconcile its antithetical elements. It shows itself to exist as a progression, a becoming, moving itself on to an other. 'Therefore', says Hegel, 'it is not *our* reflection and consideration, our judgment, which tells us that the finite with which we begin is founded on something that is true. It is not *we* who adduce its foundation. Rather it is the finite that shows implicitly that it is resolving itself into something other and higher than itself. We follow the object as it returns of itself to the source of its truth' (p. 224 [W_2]). This 'following' of what 'shows

itself' epitomizes the phenomenological approach. Hegel notes that in the lectures he cannot provide a detailed demonstration of this necessity, which really is the proper subject of the whole of philosophy that precedes the philosophy of religion (p. 221 [*Ms*]). 'Should we now desire to see how in this fashion the natural and spiritual universe returns to its truth in the religious standpoint, the detailed consideration of this return would constitute the whole sphere of the philosophical sciences' (p. 225 [W_2]) – that is all three parts of the *Encyclopaedia*, the logic, the philosophy of nature, and the philosophy of spirit. He then provides a brief synopsis of how, from the point of view of the logical idea, nature and spirit are already implicitly identical and have their root in the idea; and of how, from the point of view of the objective process, nature rises into spirit, and spirit passes through its subjective and objective (or social) forms until it reaches its goal in the absolute or religious standpoint, namely, in God as 'the absolute, all-encompassing fulfilment' (p. 230 [*Ms*]), the 'object of consciousness . . . into which the whole wealth of the natural and spiritual world has returned' (p. 231 [W_2]). Hegel indicates that the latter is a synopsis, really, of the main themes of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (p. 229 [*Ms*, W_2]).

But now, having arrived at the absolute standpoint, a peculiar thing happens. We discover that the dialectic of differentiation and return that underlies worldly process is simply an outward recapitulation of the dialectic that constitutes the divine life within itself; the same logical moments underlie the development of both God and the world – the moments of self-identity, self-othering, self-return. The 'other' that remains 'within love and within divinity' – figuratively expressed, the eternal Son of the eternal Father – is the truth, the foundation and substance, of the other as it appears as finite world and as finite consciousness. Thus the religious standpoint finally does not follow from the finite world but is its truth, its foundation. This is the ultimate demonstration of its necessity. 'The necessity that appeared to lie behind and outside the religious standpoint when it was derived from the preceding stages of the natural and spiritual world we now see to lie within it, and necessity is thus to be posited as its inner form and development.' Everything constituting the 'life of the world' is finally viewed 'in the divine life in its eternal form . . . *sub specie aeterni*' (pp. 231–2 [*Ms*, W_2]).

Here we have arrived at the point of the 'reversal' that is so characteristic of Hegel's thought – the reversal from a phenomenological to a speculative perspective. We could describe it as the 'speculative reversal'. Martin Heidegger is cognizant of it when he points out that according to Hegel the progression of consciousness is not merely 'driven' by the given shapes of consciousness but is also 'drawn by the pull of the goal' – the 'arriving presence' of the absolute, which 'brings itself forth in appearance'.[7] Hegel himself expresses it by means of a striking metaphor: 'To

philosophical cognition, the progression [of consciousness] is *a stream flowing in opposite directions*, leading forward to the other, but at the same time working backward so that what appears to be the last, founded on what precedes, appears rather to be the *first* – the foundation' (p. 227 [W_2]). Although the specific reference here is to the transition from nature to spirit, the metaphor accurately describes the dialectic underlying the whole of Hegel's philosophical thought. In fact, in the 1824 lectures Hegel generalizes the point in another striking expression: absolute spirit, he says, 'casts off its position as result and develops a *counterthrust*, so to speak, against this movement' – the movement from finite to infinite (p. 322 [1824]). 'Absolute truth cannot be a result; it is what is purely and simply first, unique. It is what takes up simply everything into itself – the absolute plenitude in which everything is but a moment' (p. 322 [1824]).

The speculative approach: the return of absolute spirit to itself

From the point of view of speculation it becomes evident that the rise of finite spirit to the absolute is at the same time the return of absolute spirit to itself, or the self-consciousness of absolute spirit.[8]

Curiously, in the 1821 lectures Hegel introduces a 'speculative definition' of the concept of religion between his discussion of the external and the internal necessity of religion (pp. 204–21 [*Ms.*]). And in the 1824 lectures the two approaches – the speculative and the phenomenological – are woven together in rather confusing fashion (pp. 314–24 [1824]). The organization here, which reflects changes in Hegel's conception of the structure as he worked out the lectures, is not very satisfactory; but it does have the effect of reminding us that the phenomenological tracing of the rise of consciousness is already being carried out within speculative brackets. That is, we must know what religion in truth is if we are to succeed in bringing it into view phenomenologically.

Speculation initially defines religion as 'the consciousness of the *true* in and for itself' or the consciousness of God as 'the absolutely self-determining true' (pp. 204, 205 [*Ms.*]). Speculation holds together religious consciousness and its object, grasping them as one, whereas reflection keeps them apart, oscillating between one side and the other. Religious consciousness is grasped as a process of rising above and passing over from the immediate, sensible and singular to the intelligible, the true, the universal. It is thus 'a going out and on to an other' – not to a third, which would entail an infinite regress – but to a second, which proves rather to be the first, the unposited, the foundation. But this first is not simply an abstract, highest essence. Rather it is the self-determined and self-determining absolute – not abstract infinitude, but '*differentiated* infinite universality', determining itself as that which contains difference, otherness, finitude within itself (pp. 205–8 [*Ms.*, W_2]; my italics). In other

words, what finite spirit passes over to is God as absolute spirit, which is not some third thing other than spirit but is precisely the unity of the natural and the spiritual, the finite and the infinite, consciousness and its object (cf. pp. 325–6 [1824]).

The religious subject is the relationship of two sides – namely, finite consciousness and infinite consciousness, absolute singularity and absolute universality, religious feeling in the form of sensibility (*Empfindung*) and religious thought in the form of devotion (*Andacht*). In a surprisingly 'existential' passage Hegel writes:

> These two sides seek each other and flee from each other. I am this conflict and this conciliation which exist in myself and for myself. I myself as infinite am opposed to myself as finite, and as finite consciousness am opposed to myself, to my thinking and consciousness, as infinite. I am what intuits, senses and represents this union and conflict. I am their holding together, the effort put forth in this holding together, the labour of mind and heart to master this opposition. which likewise exists for me. . . . I am not *one* of the parties caught up in the conflict but am both of the combatants and the conflict itself. I am the fire and water that touch each other, the contact (now separated and ruptured, now reconciled and united) and union of what utterly flies apart; and it is just this contact that is itself this double, clashing relation as relation.
>
> (Pp. 212–13 [*Ms.*]; cf. pp. 207–21)

Speculation grasps this relationship and knows that the two sides are ultimately one. But, in the domain of religion, speculation must work through the conflicting elements and bring them together out of the state of disunion or estrangement, whereas in philosophical speculation the reconciliation takes place purely in thought because both sides are known to *be* thought (pp. 205–6 [W_2]). Thus in religion, as we have suggested, speculation requires a phenomenological verification. In the history of religion consciousness keeps seeking its 'other side' in objects that are inappropriate to it (God represented as sun, mountain, absolute substance, sovereign Lord, father figure etc.), and only in the end, in the absolute religion, does it arrive at an object that is intrinsically appropriate to a knowing subject, namely, God as absolute subject or spirit.

Speculation finally grasps the religious relationship as one that ultimately is constituted not by finite consciousness but by the absolute itself. This is brought out more clearly in the 1824 lectures than in 1821; here Hegel arrives at his mature speculative definition of religion. Religion is a relationship of finite spirit to absolute spirit. This is not merely a comportment of finite spirit towards the absolute, but absolute spirit itself is that which is the self-relating, which brings itself into relation with

what is differentiated from it. Thus we now recognize that religion should be defined not simply as 'the *consciousness* [my italics] of the *true* in and for itself' (p. 204 [*Ms.*]) but also as '*the self-consciousness of absolute spirit*' (p. 318 [1824]). The other that absolute spirit knows, it itself is, and it is absolute spirit only in thus knowing itself. Finite consciousness is a moment in the dialectic of absolute consciousness. Spirit renders itself finite in order to know itself mirrored in the finite. Thus religion is the divine spirit's knowledge of itself through the mediation of finite spirit. In its highest form, 'religion is not the affair of the single human being; rather it is essentially the highest determination of the absolute idea itself' (p. 318 [1824]).

THE DIALECTIC OF SPECULATION AND PHENOMENOLOGY IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

The concept of religion: speculative development of the concept in its logical moments

From the perspective of the 1827 lectures (p. 366), the whole preceding interplay of the speculative definition of religion and the phenomenological demonstration of its necessity is merely prefatory to the formal structure of the concept of religion, which follows from the definition at which Hegel had arrived in 1824, namely, that religion is the self-consciousness of absolute spirit. The concept of religion is nothing other than the speculative development of the moments of the idea of God, which correspond to the logical moments of the concept as concept. Hegel had already arrived at this insight in the latter part of the 1824 treatment of the concept of religion (see pp. 325–6), but he did not apply it consistently to the structure of his lectures until 1827.

The moments are as follows:

1. The absolute, substantial, abstract identity of the idea with itself. This is the moment of universality, the abstract concept of God. Here we encounter the 'well-known and familiar' idea of God as absolute, self-subsisting being, *causa sui*, the abstract universal comprehending and containing everything, God as absolute substance. Every religion contains some such concept of the divine, but of itself it remains impoverished and inadequate because it has not yet advanced to the insight that God is also absolute spirit, an insight that requires the mediation of God with the otherness of the world by which the absolute is 'spiritualized' (pp. 178, 366ff. [1827]).

2. The moment of particularity or differentiation or consciousness in which the absolute is for itself by entering into relationship with that which is other than itself. 'Consciousness' implies a positing of two as different and the establishing of a relationship between the two (pp.

179–80, 380ff. [1827]). Thus God is defined as being there for consciousness, as object, as appearing, as being 'represented' in the world. In the 1824 lectures, Hegel describes this second moment as the first of two religious relationships – namely, the theoretical relationship, the representation (*Vorstellung*) of the appearance of God to consciousness (pp. 327–8 [1824]). Under this theme in the 1827 lectures he offers a speculative phenomenology of the forms of religious consciousness (immediate knowledge or faith, feeling, representation, thought) and a discussion of proofs for the existence of God, incorporating materials treated in a different context in the 1821 and 1824 lectures.[9]

3. The moment of subjectivity or of absolute affirmation, the negation of the negative, the sublation of the difference, in which the absolute returns to itself as spirit, becoming absolute subject as well as absolute substance – a return that encompasses within itself finite subjectivity, taking it up into a final recognition of all things in God (pp. 180, 441ff. [1827]). This third moment is also described in 1824 as the second relationship – the practical relationship, the cultus or worship, signifying all those rites and practices by which communion with the deity is concretely actualized in the life of the religious community (pp. 328, 336ff. [1824]). Here materials from the introductory section of the 1821 lectures are revised and expanded.

Thus in 1827 Hegel offers a speculatively derived structure for determining the moments of the concept of religion, into which he appropriates elements derived from a phenomenological approach to religion. The structure is speculative, but much if not most of the substance remains phenomenological. The structure has significance beyond the concept of religion because it establishes the categories in terms of which Hegel will analyse each of the determinate historical religions, including Christianity.

Determinate religion: phenomenology of the history of religion

In the first part of the lectures, the concept of religion, represents an essentially speculative moment into which phenomenological materials are introduced, then the second part, determinate religion, represents an essentially phenomenological moment in which the development of the speculative concept may be traced.

In a cancelled transitional phrase at the end of Part 1 of the *Ms.*, Hegel describes Part 2 as follows: 'Concept of Religion as a Whole Grasped in its Determinate Aspects: Forms of Consciousness of the Absolute Idea' (p. 255). The latter expression indicates that the whole of Part 2 is intended as a phenomenology of religion – that is to say, it will trace the various forms of finite consciousness assumed by the absolute idea as it emerges and advances through the history of religion. At the same time this history of religion is to be understood as nothing other than the development of the concept of religion, the positing or rendering

historically determinate of what is contained in the concept (pp. 110–11 [*Ms.*]). Thus the phenomenology continues to be carried out within speculative brackets. Hegel has been severely criticized for this, and indeed there is much in his treatment of the historical religions that is questionable. We cannot pursue these questions here, but one point should be noted.

Hegel was convinced that all religions participate in and contribute to the process by which the concept of religion is actualized; this means that all religions contain the concept, but in limited, finite, often distorted ways. They do not yet correspond adequately to the concept, which attains full actualization only in the absolute or revelatory religion. Thus Hegel is able to say that all religions possess rationality and truth, and although they 'are not indeed *our* religion, yet they are included in ours as essential though subordinate moments, which cannot be lacking in absolute truth. Therefore in them we have to do not with what is foreign to us but *with what is our own*' (pp. 197–8 [W_2], *Ms.*]). The conviction that all religions mediate the truth and that they are all included in 'our' religion as 'essential though subordinate moments' amounted to a revolutionary insight at the time. Although finally it did not avoid a grandiose Christian imperialism, it led Hegel to consider all expressions of religion with the utmost seriousness, and he developed a vast (though from our point of view often factually faulty) knowledge of world religions. To each of them he applied the categories derived from the concept of religion, analysing each religion's abstract conception of deity, the forms of religious consciousness that come to expression in it, and its cultic and communal practices. These analyses are remarkable for their penetrating character, for their passion to comprehend the phenomena in question and to appreciate the particular mediation of truth contained in them, while at the same time locating them in a larger developmental framework that is derived speculatively and in terms of each religion is successively superseded. What Hegel offers are phenomenological descriptions, not empirical historical accounts. He is not interested, as he puts it, in the compilation and elaboration of contingent historical data, but, rather, in the apprehension of what the history of religion means, its connection with what is true, in short, its rationality. There must, he says, be reason in the religions because after all, it is human beings who light on them and create them (p. 198 [*Ms.*]). Only human being has religion because only human being thinks, and ultimately God is only in and for thought (p. 209 [*Ms.*]).

The consummate religion: mediation of the speculative and the phenomenological

In the Christian religion, according to Hegel, the process of positing or rendering historically determinate what is contained in the concept comes to its absolute consummation (*Vollendung*). The concept of religion,

having become completely objective to itself in the representational forms of the Christian religion, returns to itself. Religion now has itself (or its concept) as its object, not some external object such as natural or human representations of deity as in the determinate religions. But the speculative concept of religion entails precisely the unity of subjective consciousness and its object, namely, God as absolute idea or spirit. This unity, and hence the concept of religion itself, is brought to completion in the consummate religion, whereas in the earlier religions a tension persists between consciousness and its object (pp. 111–12 [*Ms.*]).

Now there is no longer an alteration between the speculative and phenomenological approaches to religion. In describing the historical forms and representations of the Christian religion, we are mirroring the very concept of religion itself. This is above all the case with the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation. In the case of the Trinity we have nothing other than a representational articulation of the speculatively developed moments of the idea of God, which, as we have said, correspond to the logical moments of the concept – the moments, namely, of universality (identity), particularity (differentiation), and subjectivity (reconciliation). And in the Incarnation we find the consummate historical occurrence of the very essence of religion, namely, the relationship of finite spirit to absolute spirit, a relationship brought into being by the self-manifestation of absolute spirit.

Thus it appears that in the third part of the lectures the two ways of thinking – the speculative and the phenomenological – are fully mediated with each other and thus unified. On the one hand we have a recapitulation or 'duplication' (p. 111 [*Ms.*]) of the central themes and moments of the first part, the concept of religion; but on the other hand we have a description of the determinate historical events and doctrines making up the Christian religion, with considerable attention given to the concrete historical figure Jesus of Nazareth and to the community of faith. This is not simply historical description, of course, but a speculative redescription of the historically given contents of Christian faith. In this sense we have returned to the point of view of speculation but mediated, as it were, by the moment of phenomenological difference or distanciation.

Hegel thinks this mediation is possible because in his view the content of Christian faith is identical with the content of speculative philosophy (only their forms are different). Whether he actually succeeds in bringing together the speculative and the historical is another question, one that has been debated ever since his death. Many critics suspect that he finally reduces the historical determinacy of Christian faith to mere instances of the speculative concept, and that if these instances did not exist he would have found or invented others. Admittedly this is the temptation and danger to which Hegelian thought is subject, given its powerful speculative thrust; but it is held in check by the central role Hegel accords to

determinacy, which in turn demands phenomenological attentiveness to the way things actually appear to consciousness. If Hegel finally succumbs to the temptation, then the dialectic of which I have spoken breaks down.

Notes

* This article was presented as a lecture at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) and the University of Lancaster (England) in May 1981 and at Vanderbilt University (Nashville) in September 1981. It is based on research currently under way in preparing a new edition and translation of G. W. F. Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. A few paragraphs are derived from my chapter on 'Hegel' for *Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ninian Smart *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vol. 1. At the time the chapter was written, access to the original manuscripts on which the present article is based was not possible. I am now able to refine and expand my brief discussion of the topic of this article as it appears in that chapter. I wish to express my appreciation to the German Fulbright Commission, which supported my research during the spring and summer of 1981, and to the United States–United Kingdom Educational Commission, which sponsored the lecture tour during which this paper was first presented. I also appreciate the hospitality provided by the Hegel-Archiv of the Ruhr-Universität, Bochum.

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. and trans. P. C. Hodgson, *et al.*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984–), vol. 1. Page references to this work are placed in the text in parentheses, with the original source indicated in brackets. *Ms*: Hegel's lecture manuscript of 1821; 1824: lectures of 1824 (based primarily on the transcript by Griesheim); 1827: lectures of 1827 (reconstructed primarily from Lasson's text); W_2: passages from now-lost sources contained in vol. 11 of the 2nd edn of the *Werke* (most of these cited in the present article are from Henning's transcript of the 1821 lectures, but a few derive from miscellaneous papers in Hegel's own hand). The reason for separating and identifying the sources is given below; for additional bibliographic information, see n. 5 below.

2 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* 2nd edn (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1965), pp. 439–42.

3 Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. 2 *Die subjektive Logik* (1816), in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 12, ed. F. Hogemann and W. Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1981), p. 238.

4 Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Epochs of Church Historiography*, in *Ferdinand Christian Baur: On the Writing of Church History*, ed. and trans. P. C. Hodgson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 241.

5 A new edition of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, in which the texts of Hegel's original manuscript of 1821 and of student transcripts of the 1824 and 1827 lectures are distinguished and reconstructed, together with excerpts by D. F. Strauss of a transcript of the 1831 lectures and additional materials from now-lost sources contained in the first and second editions of the *Werke* (Berlin, 1832, 1840), is being published in three volumes by Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1983–5, edited by Walter Jaeschke in collaboration with Ricardo Ferrara and P. C. Hodgson. The English translation, which I am editing and translating together with R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart, and with the assistance of H. S. Harris, is being published by the University of California

Press, with volume 1 to appear in the spring or summer of 1984. A study edition of the third part of the lectures, entitled *The Christian Religion*, was published by Scholars Press in 1979 and will become part of the new complete translation in thoroughly revised form.

6 Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 459–72.

7 Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 30, 69, 79–80.

8 Hegel *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, rev. 2nd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 685.

9 In the 1821 and 1824 lectures, the cosmological and teleological proofs for the existence of God were taken up in connection with the abstract or metaphysical concept of God as it appears in determinate religion (pt. 2), and the ontological proof was considered in connection with the abstract concept of God in the consummate religion (pt. 3). This location indicates that the cosmological/teleological proofs correlate with the rise of consciousness to the absolute as it occurs in the history of religions and are essentially phenomenological in character, while the ontological proof correlates with the self-positing of absolute spirit as it occurs in the Christian religion and is essentially speculative in character. In the 1827 lectures, the three proofs were gathered into the concept of religion and treated as instances of the 'elevation' to God that occurs in genuine religious knowledge (pp. 414–41). The *Werke* removed the section on the proofs as it appears in the 1827 text to an appendix following Hegel's 'Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God', which are completely independent of the philosophy of religion lectures – thereby obscuring the original context of the proofs in the philosophy of religion.

Hegel's critique of religion

B. C. Birchall

I

The *Critique of Religion* emerges, in one form or another, as a central issue in both Hegel's early 'theological' period and in his later philosophical writings. It is not a critique, however, that can be as readily assimilated and comprehended as that of Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. For some commentators, Hegel's critique of religion contains an ineradicable ambivalence between, on the one hand, *rejecting* Christianity and, on the other hand, *defending* Christianity. Lukács argues that while the belief in an early 'theological' period was a legend 'created and fostered by the reactionary apologists of imperialism',[1] Hegel's critique of Christianity 'never reaches the point of materialist atheism'.[2] Hegel was critical of what he termed the 'positivity' of Christianity, but was concerned, at the same time, so Lukács argues, with working out the conditions – the social prerequisites – for a return to a 'religion of freedom on the model of antiquity'.[3]

Unlike materialist atheism, Hegel's early critique of Christianity was positive *as well as* negative. And why shouldn't it have been? As Heidegger comments: 'Usually we take this word ['critique'] at once and above all in a negative sense. Critique is for us fault-finding, and pointing to errors, emphasis on incompleteness and the corresponding rejection.'[4] But our meaning does not correspond to the original meaning of the word. ' "Critique" comes from the Greek *κρίνειν*, which means "to sort" (*sondern*), "to sort out" and thus "to lift out that of special sort" (*das Besondere herausheben*) . . . Because critique is a separation and lifting out of the special, the uncommon, and, at the same time, decisive, *therefore, and only in consequence, it is also a rejection of the commonplace and unsuitable*.'[5] Understood in this original sense of 'critique', Hegel's *critique* of religion can be seen as a two-sided process – a 'sorting

out' of the essential from the inessential; a 'disentangling' of truth from error – and who, except the most superficial of atheists, would seriously believe that a movement as influential as Christianity, for example, has no truth, but is *solely* error or illusion? But the important question remains. What *is* the truth of religion?

Hegel's answer to this question, in his later *philosophical* writings, especially *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, and in his lectures on the *Philosophy of Religion* and the *History of Philosophy*, was by no means unequivocal, and provoked, amongst his contemporaries and successors, considerable debate. Indeed, as many commentators point out, the split between the Right and Left Hegelians was symptomatic of the apparent equivocation in Hegel's attitude towards the truth of religion. Both Right and Left agreed that the arguments presented in section (CC) of the *Phenomenology*, for instance, involved a *transfiguration* of religious notions, but differed fundamentally in their respective interpretations of the *nature* of this transfiguration. The Right took Hegel to be providing a philosophical transfiguration of the notion of God, for example, as found in traditional Christianity, but one that placed God and the transfigured Christianity on a much more secure, rational, basis. The Left, on the other hand, saw the matter somewhat differently. Bauer[6] and Richter,[7] for example, saw in Hegel's arguments a transfiguration of the notion of God as found in traditional Christianity, but one that involved a *radical dissolution* of the notion of God. For Bauer and Richter, the transfiguration that took place in Hegel's work did not, as the Right thought, present the traditional God of Christianity in a *new* form or appearance; instead, it presented a secular content, such as that of *self-reflection* in its *true* form or appearance, free from the distortions of religious representation. Whereas the Right Hegelians had seen in Hegel's transfiguration arguments, a transfiguration, and thus philosophic substantiation, of the truth of Christianity *as religious truth*, the Left Hegelians saw, in the same argument, the means whereby the distortions of religious representation could be removed in order to reveal or make explicit the implicit truth of Christianity *as secular truth*.

Transfiguration argument aside, there is a lot of *prima facie* evidence in Hegel's philosophic writings to support *both* Right and Left interpretations of Hegel's attitude towards the truth of religion.

In support of the *Right* interpretation, we find statements such as: 'The subject of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, *God and nothing but God, and the explication of God*. Philosophy is not a wisdom of the world, but is knowledge of what is not of the world . . . of that which is eternal, *of what God is, and what flows out of His nature*'[8] (my italics). 'They are of necessity one Philosophy in its development, *the revelation of God, as He knows Himself to be*'[9] (my italics). 'This living process, this separation and unifying of difference, *is*

the living God'[10] (my italics). '*That this content shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of Finite Spirit.*'[11]

The Right interpretation is bedevilled, however, by statements which appear to support, as convincingly, the *Left* interpretation. 'In scientific knowledge alone it knows itself as absolute spirit; and this knowledge, or spirit, *is its only true existence*'[12] (my italics). 'I have tried to develop and bring before your thoughts this series of successive spiritual forms pertaining to Philosophy in its progress, and to indicate the connection between them. *This series is the true kingdom of spirit, the only kingdom of spirits that there is*'[13] (my italics). 'For this reason it would e.g. be expedient *to avoid the name 'God' because this word is not in its primary use a conception*'[14] (my italics). These statements, and there are many more, all seem to confirm the view that whatever transfiguration takes place, the notion of *religious* truth is not retained, as the statements supporting the Right interpretation might indicate, but is replaced, in some sense, by the notion of *philosophical* truth.

Was Hegel providing a defence or justification of a new form of Christianity or was he, as Bauer thought, a thoroughgoing atheist?[15] Clearly, the answer to this question cannot be found by collecting and counterposing selective quotations. As we have seen, *prima facie* evidence can be found in Hegel's philosophical writings to support *both* Right and Left interpretations of Hegel's attitude towards the truth of religion. The question can be settled, if at all, only by a careful examination of Hegel's *arguments*, in particular, his transfiguration argument, as presented, for example, in section (CC) of his *Phenomenology of Mind*,[16] and as outlined in the Introduction to his lectures on the *History of Philosophy*. In examining *any* argument, however, a distinction must be observed between what the argument is *thought or said* to establish and what the argument *in fact* establishes. There is little reason to assume that the philosopher who prosecutes a particular argument is necessarily in the best position to *understand* the force of that argument.

In the discussion to follow, I will argue, in effect, that the Right Hegelians followed, far too rigidly, the *letter* of Hegel's critique of religion, and that while they may have preserved, in their interpretations, the speculative content of religion, they lost, in the process, the *spirit* of Hegel's critique. The Left Hegelians, on the other hand, in following through the *spirit* of Hegel's critique of religion, exhibited a more radical temper, but lost in the process, the *speculative content* of religion. Right–Left interpretations are not, however, the only alternatives. I will argue that the spirit of Hegel's critique of religion can be pursued consistently without the concessions that Hegel and the Right Hegelians *may* have made to prevailing religious influences and without slipping, as the Left Hegelians did, into an abstract *humanistic* reductionism – without, that is to say, losing the speculative or philosophical content of Religion.[17]

My case could be seen as an *Aufhebung* of the historical clash between Right and Left interpretations of Hegel's critique of religion, culminating in a restoration of consistency, not Christianity, in that critique.

II

What is Hegel's *transfiguration argument*? It is an argument which contains as one of its central claims, that 'Religion has a content in common with Philosophy the forms alone being different'.[18] The form of religious representation is said to be essentially that of *Vorstellung* (picture-thinking), which is different to the form of philosophical representation, i.e. the form of the notion. But the pictorial thought of the religious communion is not this notional thinking; it has the content without its necessity; and instead of the form of the notion it brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son."[19] *Vorstellung* is not only different from philosophical representation; it is also said to be *inadequate* to the form of the notion. 'It may thus be said that it was the very first-born Son of Light (Lucifer) who, by becoming self-concentrated, fell, but that in his place another was at once created. Such a form of expression as "fallen", belonging merely to figurative thought, and not to the notion, just like the term "Son", either (we may say) transmutes and *lowers* the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought, or transfers pictures into the realm of thought'[20] (my italics). In failing to represent the notion *as notion*, in lowering the moments of the notion to the level of *imaginative* thought, religious representation is unable to comprehend its own content. 'Philosophy as a thinking that *comprehends* this content [the dogma of the Church], has the advantage over the picture-thinking of religion in that it understands both; for it understands religion and can do justice to it; it also understands rationalism and supernaturalism; and also it understands itself. But the converse is not true; religion as such, since its standpoint is that of picture-thinking, recognizes itself only in such thinking, not in philosophy, i.e. in Notions, in universal determinations of thought. Often, a philosophy is rightly reproached for its opposition to religion, but often, too, the reproach is unmerited, viz. when it emanates from the religious standpoint; just because religion does not understand philosophy.'[21] Hegel is claiming, in other words, that philosophy can comprehend itself and religion simply because philosophical representation is adequate to the content to be comprehended, i.e. *is* the form of the content. The converse is not true. Religion, whilst it may *recognize* itself in its own representations, cannot *comprehend* itself or philosophy simply because religious representation is not adequate to the content to be comprehended, i.e. *is not* the form of the content. But if the content of religion can be comprehended only

at the philosophic standpoint, then this entitles us to conclude that the content of religion, however it might be represented *by* religion, is nothing but *the notion of philosophy*. The truth of religion, then, as revealed by Hegel's transfiguration argument, is not some *religious* truth in a new form or appearance, but is *truth* as such or *philosophy* in its appropriate form or appearance, i.e. the form of universal thought-determinations or notions, free from the distortions of religious *Vorstellung*.

Hegel's critique of religion, as exemplified in his transfiguration argument, embodies the Greek sense of critique. It is not a mere fault-finding or a wholesale rejection of religion, but is a warning to both theist and atheist that there is more to religion than meets the eye. Religion is not just religion, but is a mixture of religious representation and philosophical truth, i.e. a mixture of form *and* content. In finding the truth of religion in philosophy, Hegel is, at the same time, demonstrating the inadequacy of religious representation. For this reason, it would be a grave mistake to interpret 'finding the truth of religion in philosophy' as some roundabout way of endorsing the literal truth of religious utterances. Considered problematically, the truth of religion is simply the *intelligibility of religion*, i.e whatever it is that enables us to *comprehend* religion as form *and* content. In comprehending religion as form and content, we are forced to recognize the distinction between religious representation and philosophic content, a content which can be represented adequately only in its *own* form; in the form of universal thought-determinations or notions, i.e. in the *form of philosophy*. Because religion is quasi-philosophy, an intermingling of religious representation *and* philosophic content, it would be a grave mistake, as well, to treat religion and philosophy as utterly opposed, for this would be to treat, in part, philosophy as utterly opposed to philosophy. What philosophy is opposed to is not religion – form *and* content – but religious *representation*, i.e. the pictorial representation of that content. So Hegel is critical of the one-sided critique of religion, for such an approach 'rejects the content along with the form, and, what comes to the same thing, degrades the content into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition. In this way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retention of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge; while the inner element in belief has passed away, because this would be the notion knowing itself'.[22]

III

So far, the discussion of Hegel's transfiguration argument has confined itself to the question of *interpretation*. Substantiation of the argument,

however, is another question altogether. I said earlier that the argument contains, as one of its central *claims*, that 'Religion has a content in common with Philosophy the forms alone being different'. Needless to say, the argument does not establish, but *presupposes*, the truth of this claim. To avoid the implications of the transfiguration argument, a theologian need only *deny* the claim upon which that argument rests. But Hegel's argument, as might be expected, is not worked out independently of his Logic. For substantiation, then, we need to turn to Hegel's *Logic*. Here we discover, so I will argue, an acute dilemma whose resolution involves the admission that 'Religion has a content in common with Philosophy the forms alone being different'.

In the *Logic*, Hegel argues that the truth of the finite consists in its 'surpassing itself as finite', i.e. *in its infinitude*. This is a somewhat oblique way of saying that the intelligibility of the finite does not and cannot consist in its determination as finite. Just as we can comprehend Being and Not-Being only as moments of determinate Being, we can comprehend determinate Being only as having moments of Being and Not-Being. In other words, the truth or intelligibility of determinate Being is its *categorial* moments or determinations. Indeed, it is only in terms of categorial moments or determinations that Hegel is able to 'reconcile' the finite and the infinite, that is to say, 'reconcile' the finite with its *own* truth or intelligibility. This means that the finite must 'go outside of itself' to be intelligible. In admitting that the truth or intelligibility of the finite is not itself a finite consideration, we are recognizing the logical dependence of the finite sciences on science as such or philosophy.[23]

Now we have the following dilemma for religious representation. If religious determinations such as God, the Holy Ghost, divine nature etc. are intended as mere *finite* determinations, then it follows, according to Hegel's *Logic*, that the truth or intelligibility of religion is the categorial moments or determinations comprising the subject matter philosophy. In such a case, religion would be *subject* to the categorial moments or determinations governing the intelligibility of *any* finite science, and could not, for that reason, claim any *special* significance over and above other finite sciences, let alone philosophy. On the other hand, if religious determinations are intended, in some sense, to *be* the truth or intelligibility of the finite, then it follows, according to Hegel's *Logic*, that the content of religion *is* the categorial moments or determinations comprising the subject matter *philosophy*. In this case, religion, in *being* the truth or intelligibility of the finite, would not itself be *subject* to the categorial moments or determinations governing the intelligibility of any *finite* science, and could, for that reason, claim a *special* significance over and above the finite sciences, but only at the expense of losing its *theological* significance. In losing its theological significance, however, it loses its

religious determination and becomes indistinguishable from philosophy, i.e. the science of the intelligibility of the finite.[24]

That religion *does* claim a special significance over and above the finite sciences supports the view that the content of religion is not the merely finite. Its special significance, then, must be derived from a content that is *infinite*. In Hegel's *Logic* there is no other alternative. Now religion is faced with the problem, an insuperable one, of reconciling its finite (pictorial) mode of representation with its own content. To retain a special *and* theological significance, religion has no alternative but to internalize the dilemma under the camouflage of 'mystery' or 'incomprehensibility'. Religion becomes 'mysterious' or 'incomprehensible' in which faith, not reason, is presumed to be the guiding light.

Hegel was not one to be swayed by appeals to 'mystery' or 'incomprehensibility'. There is no content that is, in itself, mysterious or incomprehensible. A content that is distinguishable *as finite* is comprehensible in terms of the categorial moments or determinations of the finite, whereas a content that is distinguishable *as infinite* is the very ground of comprehensibility, i.e. the categorial moments or determinations themselves. In the case of religion, what is 'mysterious' or 'incomprehensible' is not the *content* of religion (the infinite) but the *use* of finite forms of representation as a means of comprehending what is not itself a finite consideration. That is to say, it is not the categories or moments of intelligibility that are 'mysterious' or 'incomprehensible', but the assumption on the part of the abstract understanding[25] as exemplified in religious representation, that the categories or moments of intelligibility *can be comprehended in finite form*. The assumption is, in other words, that the *form of the notion* can be comprehended and represented in terms of, for example, 'the *natural* relations of Father and Son'[26] (my italics).

The use of religious representation is the attempt to have it both ways. It is to treat the content of religion as *both* finite and infinite. In so far as religion retains a *theological* significance, one can only suppose that the content of religion is *of the finite*. But in order to claim a *special* significance, over and above the finite sciences, the content of religion is presumed to be of the *infinite*. Whether religion internalizes the dilemma in the notion of *transcendence*, or simply in the appeal to 'mystery' or 'incomprehensibility', the contradiction is unavoidable. It is, in fact, one instance of what Hegel terms the *Bad Infinite*. To treat the infinite as if it were a finite determination, however, is to posit the infinite in a 'qualitative relation of opposition to the finite as its Other',[27] and this, so Hegel says, 'must be called the bad infinite or the infinite of the Understanding'.[28] That the attempt to have it both ways is no resolution of the dilemma is clear from the 'contradictions which assail it from every side'.[29] We find a contradiction, for instance, 'in the fact that the finite remains opposed to the infinite as a Determinate Being; thus there are

two determinatenesses: there are two worlds, the finite and the infinite.'[30] What Hegel means is that the infinite, once conceptualized as another finite, 'becomes' another Determinate Being which opposes and excludes its opposite, viz. the familiar finite. That this position is untenable is clear from the fact that the finite *cannot* oppose or exclude the infinite, i.e. its own intelligibility, since the very statement *presupposes*, for its intelligibility, categories or moments of the infinite that it is said to oppose or exclude. This is the consequence of attempting to treat the infinite as if it were no more than some finite determination.

So we are confronted by a contradiction which can be overcome only by giving up the notion of the Bad Infinite, by returning to the original dilemma, and attempting to resolve it, rather than to internalize it. Either the *content* of religion is a finite consideration or it is of the infinite. If it is a finite consideration, then religion loses any special significance over and above the finite sciences and becomes one finite science among many, subject to the categories or moments of intelligibility comprising the subject matter philosophy. If it is of the infinite, then it can no longer be represented in the finite mode characteristic of religious representation. It is able to retain a special significance, but only at the expense of its theological significance, for now, as commented on previously, it becomes indistinguishable from philosophy.

At this stage we can return to the transfiguration argument. The content of religion *is* the infinite, since religion claims a special significance over and above the finite sciences. For this reason, we have no option but to agree with Hegel that 'Religion has a content in common with Philosophy the forms alone being different.'[31] As we saw earlier, this claim is a presupposition of the transfiguration argument. Because the form of religious representation, however, is not adequate to the *content* of religion, the remainder of the argument can be seen as a working out of the dilemma to its logical conclusions. By stripping the content of religion of its religious representation, Hegel reconciles form *and* content in the notion of philosophy and *resolves* the dilemma. The transfiguration argument, then, seen in the context of Hegel's *Logic*, dispenses, not with the content of religion, for this is shown to be philosophy, but with the *religious representation* of that content. And this is precisely what Hegel advises in the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind*. 'It would, e.g. be expedient to avoid the name "God", because this word is not in its primary use a conception as well, but the special name of an underlying subject, its fixed resting-place; while, on the other hand, being or the one, singleness, etc., themselves directly indicate conceptions. . . . Philosophical exposition, faithfully following its insight into the nature of speculative truth, must retain the dialectical form, and *exclude everything which is not grasped conceptually and is conception*'[32] (my italics).

IV

Having dispensed with *religious truth*, as something distinct from philosophical truth, Hegel continues to use religious representation as if it were appropriate to the form of philosophy. He says that 'The object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity; *God and nothing but God, and the explication of God*'[33] (my italics). Statements such as this suggest that Hegel has *not* dispensed with the notion of religious truth, but is claiming, on the contrary, that the content which religion and philosophy share *can* be represented adequately in terms of the picture-thinking characteristic of religion. Such a move is not consistent, however, with his own transfiguration argument. To be consistent, he should have said, 'The object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity *which philosophy is able to represent in these terms but which religion can represent only pictorially* as "God and nothing but God, and the explication of God".' What is the explanation of Hegel's apparent inconsistency?

Copleston, in defending the notion of *religious truth*, argues that 'Hegel does not separate the concept of truth from religious statements and attach it only to philosophical statements. Religious statements can be true. And when the philosopher expresses their truth in a different form, it is the *same truth* which he is presenting. That is to say, in Hegel's opinion the truth remains the same'[34] (my italics). Admittedly, Hegel does not separate the concept of truth from *religion* and attach it only to philosophy. 'Nothing is further from the aim of philosophy than to overthrow religion, and to maintain forsooth *that the content of religion cannot for itself be truth.* On the contrary, *it is just religion which is the true content*, only in the form of idea or ordinary thought'[35] (my italics). Indeed, if Hegel did separate the concept of truth from *religion* and attach it only to philosophy, this would be contrary to one of the central claims in the transfiguration argument that religion and philosophy *have the same content*, the forms alone being different. It is a different matter altogether to claim that this admission licenses Copleston's interpretation that 'Hegel does not separate the concept of truth from religious *statements* and attach it only to philosophical *statements*' and that 'religious *statements* can be true'. For this to be a defence of the notion of religious truth, Copleston would have to argue that religious statements are *literally* true. Hegel has argued, however, that religious representation is not adequate to the form of the notion, i.e. that religion, because of its picture-thinking, *mis*represents the form of its own content. On the other hand, an appeal to *metaphorical* truth is to give the game away. We might say, for example, that a statement such as 'This living process, this separation and unifying of differences, is the living God',[36] is a religious metaphor for the *philosophical truth* that this living process, this separ-

ation and unifying of differences is the dialectic of Reason. In recognizing that religious statements are only metaphors for philosophical truths, however, we are, at the same time, recognizing that there is no *religious truth* as such, only philosophical truth. Copleston has no alternative but to accept this conclusion, especially when we look carefully at his claim that 'when the philosopher expresses their truth in a different form, it is the *same truth* which he is presenting'. There are, so far as I can see, only three ways of understanding this notion of *having the same truth*.

(1) The truth which religion and philosophy have in common *has no form in and for itself*. In this case, Hegel could not criticize religion for representing this 'formless truth' in terms of picture-thinking. He could not argue that religious representation 'transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought',[37] nor would his advice to 'avoid the name "God", because this word is not in its primary use a conception'[38] make any sense. Moreover, Hegel would be faced with the insoluble problem of a 'formless truth' – a Kantian *Ding-an-Sich* – which is said to be the *content* of both religion and philosophy but which is indescribable.

(2) The truth which religion and philosophy have in common *has a religious form in and for itself*. If this were so, Hegel could not criticize religion for representing a religious truth in the form appropriate to religious truth, viz. picture-thinking. Nor could he argue that it is only philosophy which is able to comprehend itself and religion, since if *religious truth* is the content of both religion and philosophy, religion would be more suited to the comprehension of itself and philosophy than philosophy. And it matters not to the force of the transfiguration argument whether religious truth appears in the particular form of 'transcendence' or in the particular form of 'immanence'. Hegel's argument works as effectively against an '*immanent God*' as against a '*transcendent God*'. The Bad Infinite can be projected into the 'beyond' or 'internalized'. In the case of 'transcendence', we have a Bad Infinite 'out there'; in the case of 'immanence', a Bad Infinite 'everywhere'. But the criticism remains the same. Indeed, Hegel argues that genuine immanence, the reconciliation of the finite and the infinite, can be found only in philosophy, in the *form* of the notion.[39]

(3) The truth which religion and philosophy have in common *has a philosophical form in and for itself*. This alternative is the only one consistent with Hegel's transfiguration argument. It enables us to make sense of his claim that religious representation 'transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought' and of his advice to 'avoid the name "God", because this word is not in its primary use a conception'. It is consistent also with Hegel's contention that it is only philosophy which is able to comprehend itself and religion.

And this is the understanding arrived at earlier of Hegel's transfiguration argument.

There appears to be no way of salvaging the notion of *religious truth* that is consistent with Hegel's transfiguration argument. To take statements such as 'The object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, *God is nothing but God and the explication of God*'[40] (my italics) as endorsements of religious truths is to accuse Hegel of straightforward inconsistency. The important question is, of course, can such statements be understood as anything but endorsements of religious truth? A possible line of defence for Hegel can be found in his lectures on the *History of Philosophy*, where he says 'Finitude is thus in the infinite itself, and this is, indeed, a great thought. "God gave the world the most appropriate motion of all the seven, being that which harmonizes best with mind and consciousness, motion in a circle; the other six He took away from it and liberated it from their variations" (movements backwards and forwards). *This is only a popular way of putting it.*'[41] In elaboration of religious representation being a *popular* mode of consciousness, Hegel explains 'The form of Religion is necessary to Mind as it is in and for itself; it is the form of truth as it is for all men, and for every mode of consciousness. This universal mode is first of all for all men in the form of sensuous consciousness, and then, secondly, in the intermingling of the Form of the universal with sensuous manifestation or reflection – the representing consciousness, the mythical, positive and historical form, is that pertaining to the understanding. What is received in evidence of Mind only becomes object to consciousness when it appears in the form of the understanding, that is to say, consciousness must first be already acquainted with these forms from life and from experience. *Now, because thinking consciousness is not the outward universal form for all mankind, the consciousness of the true, the spiritual and the rational, must have the form of Religion, and this is the universal justification of this form.*'[42] (my italics). This amounts to the argument that as everyone is not capable of arriving at the philosophic standpoint, the standpoint of thinking consciousness, religious representation remains, for the many, an important representation and appreciation of philosophical truth. I have a number of comments to make on this possible line of defence and justification of religious representation in Hegel's philosophic writings.

Importantly, the appeal to popular consciousness makes no difference to the implications of the transfiguration argument. Even if we accept Hegel's claim that religious representation is no more than a popular way of representing philosophy to the masses, those capable only of understanding and not speculative reason, this is no argument for a re-endorsement of the literal truth of religious statements. Can the appeal to popular consciousness, however, save Hegel from inconsistency? It is

difficult to see how. Hegel is not writing for a popular audience, but for a largely *philosophical* audience. Why, then, present this philosophy, in many parts, as a *combination* of religious and philosophical notions? For those capable only of understanding, the philosophical notions would be beyond their grasp, whilst for those capable of speculative reason, the religious notions would be mere hindrances to comprehension. It is not the case that whenever Hegel uses a religious notion he is *illustrating* a popular presentation which is then translated, in accordance with his transfiguration argument, into a purely philosophical notion. This is so in some contexts, but clearly not so in others. The place, then, of religious notions in philosophic contexts such as 'Thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions *in order to occupy itself with God*'[43] (my italics), especially when Hegel talks of there being 'but one method in all science', this method being '*the self-unfolding Notion (Begriff) and nothing else*'[44] (my italics), remains unexplained.

It is precisely this religious gloss on some of Hegel's philosophical expositions which encourages the view, despite his repeated denials,[45] that Hegel is a pantheist. Even so, as Lukács comments: 'We are reminded here of Schopenhauer's *mot* that pantheism is the polite form of atheism, a polite stratagem for bowing God out of the universe'.[46] More to the point, though, Hegel's own transfiguration argument, supported by logical considerations, cannot countenance *religious truth*, whether in the form of theism or pantheism. Hegel's appeal to popular consciousness *might* be a defence of religious presentation *for popular consciousness*, but it is hardly a justification of his own continued use of such presentations in key *philosophical* expositions. Hegel's failured to be thoroughgoing could have been due to a whole host of factors, an obvious one being an unwitting concession to prevailing religious influences. Whatever the reason, Hegel's critique of religion carries with it unexplained and unsupported religious overtones that are simply inconsistent with the major thrust of his transfiguration argument. I can only agree with Seth's comment that 'whatever may have been Hegel's *personal* position in the matter, *the negative view* taken by his most daring and perhaps his ablest followers – the Hegelians of the Left, as they were called – would appear to be the only one for which, *in consistency*, the system has room'[47] (my italics).

V

My agreement with Seth is qualified, however, by the context. Seth's point, that *the negative view* taken by the Left-Hegelians would appear to be the only one for which *in consistency*, Hegel's system has room, is

another way of putting my point, in an historical context, that Hegel's transfiguration argument *leaves no room, in consistency, for the notion of religious truth*. But this is the extent of my agreement with the Left interpretation of Hegel's critique of religion. I reject their humanistic reductionism, as should be evident from my emphasis throughout the paper on the *philosophic* (speculative) content of religion. It would be a gross error to attempt to reduce Hegel's philosophy, his science of the intelligibility of the finite, to some humanistic notion, which would, itself, presuppose such a philosophy for its own intelligibility.[48] I reject, also, Bauer's claim, for example, that Hegel is a thoroughgoing atheist. This point of disagreement will appear somewhat surprising, for if Hegel's transfiguration argument leaves no room, in consistency, for the notion of religious truth, then what can he be but an atheist? Atheism is not the only alternative to theism. To take atheism to be the only reasonable alternative to theism is to fail to appreciate the true significance of Hegel's *critique* of religion.

The traditional opposition between atheism and theism has meaning only at the standpoint of the *understanding*. The issue is that of the existence or non-existence of the subject term 'God'. Theism produces arguments to prove the *existence* of God: atheism counters these arguments and produces other arguments to prove the *non-existence* of God. The question of the existence or non-existence of God, however, makes sense only if God is a *finite* determination, subject, like other finite determinations, to the categories of existence/non-existence. Were this true, God could not claim, and religion could not claim, any *special* significance over and above the finite sciences. To have a special significance, God and the content of religion must somehow surpass the finite, govern the finite, which means, for Hegel, that *the content of religion is of the infinite*. But if the content of religion is of the infinite, then it makes no sense to speak of that content or any categorial determination of that content existing or not existing. Working out a philosophy, a science of the intelligibility of the finite, is not a task which raises the issue of the existence or non-existence of some *finite* determination X. Indeed, Hegel's critique of religion can be seen as an attempt to show that the *issue* which represents the opposition between atheism and theism does not represent the form of the content of religion. His critique, unlike that of atheism, is not directed against the *existence* of God, but against the very *form* in which religious issues are raised, i.e. against the *very notion of religious truth*. This is not to reject atheism or theism *in toto*. From atheism, Hegel extracts the denial of a *finite God* (religious representation), whilst from theism he extracts the assertion of an *infinite God* (philosophical content). Atheism, in denying a finite God, does not distinguish between form and content, and denies content as well,

whereas theism, in preserving the notion of an infinite God, equally does not distinguish between form and content, and preserves form as well.

At the beginning of the paper, I said that some commentators took Hegel's critique of religion to contain an ineradicable ambivalence between, on the one hand *rejecting* Christianity and, on the other hand, *defending* Christianity. We are now in a position to see that this 'ineradicable ambivalence' is explicable in terms of his *Aufhebung* of atheism and theism. What he rejects is not Christianity, but the form of Christianity which he argues is inappropriate to its content or truth. What he defends is not Christianity, but the *content* of Christianity which he takes to be philosophical truth. As Hegel's critique of religion involves a 'sorting out', a 'lifting out that of special sort' and, only in consequence, 'a rejection of the common-place and unsuitable', far from it containing an 'ineradicable ambivalence', it exemplifies the original Greek sense of critique. This is not to say that there is no ambivalence in Hegel's critique. There remains the ambivalence between the spirit of his arguments and the occasional concession to the notion of religious truth in his own philosophic expositions. But this ambivalence is not ineradicable.

By presenting an account of Hegel's critique of religion, which I take to be an *Aufhebung* of Left–Right interpretations, I hope to have disclosed *that* critique as an *Aufhebung* of atheism and theism, one which dispenses with the notion of religious truth and, in its place, substantiates philosophy as the one and only science of the intelligibility of the finite. In so far as Hegel's transfiguration argument is followed through consistently, Hegel emerges, not as an atheist or as a theist, but *as a philosopher.*[49]

Notes

1 G. Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, trans. R. Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p. 16.

2 ibid., p. 9.

3 ibid.

4 M. Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, trans. W. B. Barton & V. Deutsch (Indiana: Gateway Editions Ltd, 1967), p. 119.

5 ibid., pp. 119–20.

6 K. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought*, trans. D. E. Green (London: Constable 1965), p. 344.

7 N. Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), p. 187.

8 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, trans. E. B. Speirs & J. Burdon Sanderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, rep. 1962), p. 19.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, trans. E. S. Haldane & F. H. Simson (New Jersey: Humanities Press, rep. 1974), p. 547.

10 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 77.

11 G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. I, trans. W. H. Johnson & L. C. Struthers (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 4th imp. 1966), p. 60.

12 Hegel *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, p. 552.

13 ibid., p. 553.

14 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 8th imp. 1971), p. 124.

15 Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, p. 344.

16 I will not be dealing with details of the passage from one stage of religion to another, for example, from natural to revealed religion, but with the *general* question of what emerges from such a development, i.e. with the *truth* of religion as such.

17 I agree with Hyppolite. Even if Hegel 'does seem to lean toward this humanism, he rejects the complete reduction of God to man'. J. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. S. Cherniak & J. Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 543.

18 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 79.

19 Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 767.

20 ibid., p. 771.

21 Hegel *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Hoffmeister's edition, p. 192), quoted by M. Westphal in his Introduction to 'Reason and Religious Truth', Hegel's Foreword to H. Fr. W. Hinrich's *Die Religion im inneren Verhältnisse zur Wissenschaft*, in F. G. Weiss, ed., *Beyond Epistemology*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 227.

22 Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 768.

23 See my paper, ' "Dialectic" and "Formal Logic" in Hegel's *Logic*' (forthcoming in *Clio*) and 'Hegel's Notion of *Aufhehen*' (submitted for publication; copies available from author) for elaboration of this interpretation of Hegel's *Logic*.

24 A similar dilemma, but cast in the context of the proposition, can be found in the works of the Scottish born realist John Anderson: 'Now the question for theism is whether or not God is a subject, a term in various propositions. If so, that term is subject to logic just as other terms are: the same questions (where it occurs, how it proceeds, what are its conditions etc.) can be raised about it as about any other subject. But if that is so, if God is a particular thing, then there is no more question of a theistic philosophy than there is of an animalistic philosophy because there are animals. The only other possibility is that God is not a term, is not part of the material of propositions, but is part of the form of propositions; and that is not something that either the supporters or the opponents of theism would admit.' 'Logic and Dogma', *Honi Soit*, XXIII, 18, 2 August, 1951, p. 3.

25 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 79.

26 Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 767.

27 Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. I, p. 152.

28 ibid.

29 ibid.

30 ibid., pp. 152–3. I am not talking of the *Bad Infinite* in the sense of 'infinite progression', but in the sense of *dualism*; see the smaller *Logic* (Part One of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. W. Wallace (London: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1975), as well, especially pp. 138–41.

31 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 79.

32 Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 124.

33 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 19.

34 F. C. Copleston, 'Hegel and the Rationalization of Mysticism', in W. E. Steinkraus, ed., *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), p. 193.

35 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I. pp. 154–5.

36 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 77.

37 Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 771.

38 ibid., p. 124.

39 See Hegel's reconciliation of 'Being' and 'Not-Being' in the notion of *Determinate Being* in both the *Science of Logic* and the smaller *Logic*, as well as his discussion of *Infinity* (C) under *Determinate Being* in the *Science of Logic* and *Infinity* under (b) *Being Determinate* in the smaller *Logic*. L. Colletti's *Marxism and Hegel*, trans. L. Garner (London: New Left Books, 1973), pp. 11–14, is interesting on this question.

40 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 19.

41 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 78.

42 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 81.

43 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 20.

44 ibid., p. 59.

45 Cf. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, pp. 96–7.

46 Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 529.

47 A. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality* (New York: Franklin, rep. 1971), p. 189.

48 This is not to say, however, that philosophic *consciousness* plays no part in Hegel's transfiguration of religion. But I have been interested primarily, in this paper, in the *objective* side of his critique of religion, which is to be distinguished from, certainly not reduced to, the subjective side.

49 Whether or not *Hegel* would agree with my conclusion is another question. As I mentioned, earlier in the paper, it is important to distinguish between what an argument is *thought or said* to establish and what an argument *in fact* establishes. By keeping this distinction in mind we are in a position to restore consistency to Hegel's critique of religion.